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THE

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By WILLIAM R. ALGER.

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THE NATURE, GROUNDS, AND USES OF FAITH.

One of the chief characteristics of the New Testament is the preëminent importance it attributes to faith; its constant and emphatic iteration of the incomparable value of faith; everywhere projecting upon attention the vital necessity of faith. "Without faith," we are assured, "it is impossible to please God." "By the works of the law no man can be justified," "but faith is counted for righteousness." "Have faith, and all things shall be possible unto you." "He that believeth shall be saved." In short, there is hardly a page of the Christian records which does not bear some decisive witness to the indispensable power of faith, that principle of belief which works by love, and reconciles the sinner with the law, and overcomes the world, and joins the soul for ever to its God with thrilling bonds of bliss. That the Gospel estimate of faith is none too high, but our common estimate of it far too low, perhaps we shall see, more and more, as we go on, from step to step. Indeed, a brief general declaration of what faith directly effects in our experience, what a tremendous relation it sustains, will suffice to show in a plain and popular manner what will afterwards be proved in a more minute and philosophical form, namely, that faith is not a more

fundamental, leading, and supernatural dogma in the documents of Christianity than it is a pervading, important, and divine fact in actual human life.

Faith, practically speaking, is that side of the soul which opens upon God, and bestows upon us the whole spiritual world. The infinite realm and throng of the invisible, future, supernatural, is its province and gift to us. By it, when the present and the actual are hard and dreary, loaded with anguish and despair, we escape from their tangible round and mortal pressure, amidst scenes of beauty and romance, sublime and kindling opportunities, that entrance the mind and charm every weary pang away. In bereavement and loneliness the broken heart, robbed of every other solace, still bounds to faith's lyric prophecies of reunion and joy beneath skies that never wear a frown, and in Elysian fields where never fades a flower. The bond of everlasting connection between us and the infinite, the open avenue through which our thoughts and desires go out to God and spiritual things, and through which their returning blessings come into us, — it is certainly our grandest and most wonderful endowment. In the common and careless use of it we do not realize how necessary, how soothing and august a privilege it is. Revealing an all-comprehending paternal providence to us, revealing Christ to us, and the angelic hosts, and the ransomed spirits of men, and the waiting shores of a better world, it casts a divine radiance on all our darkness, sheds a heavenly balm upon our wounds, promises compensation for every earthly wrong, reward for every earthly sacrifice, and is the vindicating fulfilment of all present defectiveness. If we were deprived of the power of faith, and shut up to the narrow range of actual, sensible things, we should be the most wretched of beings. The inspiration of the soul would be gone, the motive would be

taken from all high endeavor and self-sacrifice, turning them into utter drudgery and evil; the noblest virtues would, therefore, disappear, and the sweetest joys be destroyed, the grave be dreadful, and humanity sink from its godlike heights to the level of a better order of brutes. It is moral and religious belief that, bringing us into communion with unbounded truths and loves and glories, consoles us under our sorrows, invigorates us under our toils, makes us happy with undecaying joys, imparts to us our chief impulses to uproot sin, resist temptation, and cultivate virtue, upholds us in sickness, whispers immortal things in the closing ear, and enables us with solemn trust, not unmingled with exulting expectation, to sever the last chord which binds us to time, and launch away on the sightless sea. Faith, then, is as plainly a ruling reality in the structure of the life of man as it is an essential doctrine in the spirit of the religion of Christ.

Proceeding now to grapple with the specific details of the subject before us, it will be well at first to acquire a clearer and more precisely defined conception of exactly what is meant by the word *faith*. The word *faith* is often employed loosely, with various meanings; now signifying that *state of the consciousness* in which are inwardly produced, and recognized with a ruling assurance, the mental reflections of things neither sensibly approached nor demonstratively deduced; now referring to that *power of the soul* by which we are able to believe in spiritual things; again spoken of as an *act*, that act of the reason and the moral will by which we accept, and obey the demands of, ideal propositions; and again used as synonymous with the sum of our trusted expectations, the total *subject-matter* of our belief. In all these explanations, however, it is to be observed, the essential thing is the same, namely, an influential recogni-

tion of realities undiscernible by the senses. The great, proper meaning of faith — the sense in which the Scriptures prevailingly use the term, and in which we shall employ it now — is a state of the human consciousness in relation to the unseen, the outwardly unrealized, the unknown; that apprehending, accepting, and active state of the consciousness which is directly opposed to rejection, emptiness, and indolence, and which ranges between hope and knowledge. Faith — as the New Testament, with intense earnestness of repetition, and with perfect truth to the facts of experience and analysis, everywhere describes it — is as much — or more — a moral exercise and condition as it is an intellectual; it is an act and state of the whole conscious nature. Speaking with the sharpest nicety of metaphysical accurateness, faith is an interior realization of its outward objects, and a conformed experience. Specific Christian faith, for example, is an inward sight and clasp of the objects, truths, and feelings of Christianity. Faith in God is spiritual vision of God, accompanied by reverence, aspiration, obedience, and love. That is what faith means in the Evangelic records, and in the Apostolic letters. That is what it is in the souls of earnest and faithful men.

The exact nature and scope of faith may be more completely understood, perhaps, by explaining it with reference to its two adjacent states of mind and moods of feeling. The relation is this. When our assurance of reality concerning any supposed thing reaches such a pitch that it induces us to act in obedience to its resulting claims, it is practically faith; the degree of expectation below that is hope. Such an assurance continues to be faith until, by the access of successive degrees of confirmation, it becomes so strong that nothing can make us more sure of it, because we already feel certain; then it has passed into knowledge.

All the intermediate domain thus defined between hope and knowledge — a domain which evidently comprises a very large and momentous part of our experience — is occupied by faith. The recognition and influence of many things which we cannot by any means know, are yet absolutely necessary to such a being as man, situated as he is in this world. The power of believing, without knowing, meets this want, brings us into virtual contact with the distant, the unseen, the possible, and so enables us to feel and act as if we were already grasping tangible realities. Therefore we see, in the outset, that faith is a justified fact, occupying a legitimate place in our consciousness and action. It is not opposed to reason, or in any way inconsistent with it; but, on the contrary, it is supported and necessitated by reason, — is the swift and large complement of lagging and imperfect reason. At all events, do what we please, faith is actually an inseparable and leading part of our nature, an essential and controlling element of our life. No one can look into his own mind and reflect a little without perceiving that man is so made and so related that faith, independent of his will, and by necessity, is a wide and prominent fact of his being and experience.

Faith, though not wholly, is yet to a great degree independent of our will. The labor intrusted to us, the extent of our voluntary power and duty, is to guard it against its exposures; restraining it, on the one side, from the excess and folly of superstition, and preserving it at the same time, on the other side, from unreasonable scepticism and denial, and thus keeping it ever at the golden medium of rationality. This is no unreal or trivial task; to believe only the truth, and to believe that with a vivid force which fills, rules, and satisfies the soul. For there have been, on the one extreme, those whose wild and greedy faith has peopled space

and experience with the horrid shapes and frantic revels of nightmare. So there have been, on the opposite extreme, others whose distrustful, diseased fancies have led them to deny the possibility of any trustworthy assurance, refuse to believe in the existence of any thing. Pyrrho, one of the most accomplished and renowned of the Greek philosophers, — and he stands not alone, — so far disbelieved the reality of outward objects, that precipices were nothing to him, the points of deadly weapons nothing, the wheels of carriages threatening to pass over his neck nothing. Some of his friends were obliged to accompany him to protect him against the results of his own principles. To be sure, this is an extreme case, bordering, perhaps, even upon insanity; but thousands on thousands of persons are tormented all their lives long by natural tendencies to scepticism, which they find it difficult to counteract; — persons who are unable to believe vigorously in any thing, who cannot get near enough to truths and things to experience their polarizing power, and who consequently feel life and the world, not as a thrilling conflict, the arena filled with substantial friends and foes, but as a pallid round of dreams and procession of phantoms. The man who believes too little, the sceptical man, must be unhappy; for the craving hollowness within, which nothing but a substantial faith can fill, follows him where he goes, haunts him with a heavy unrest in his thoughtful hours, and, with a melancholy yearning, aches, aches for ever. The sceptic — hardened, depressed, enervated, by the chilling, sorrowful, and debilitating effects of his disbelieving habits — is miserable. The man who believes too much, the superstitious man, also must be unhappy; for remorse, fear, foreboding, which nothing but a sober and stable faith can remove, will harass his breast, mingle in his dreams, intrude into his prayers, crowd the future with

phantoms, and rob him of the sweetness of peace. The fanatic, disturbed, frightened, disappointed, fevered, by his exaggerated and mistaken expectations, is miserable. Neither the man who believes too little, then, nor the man who believes too much, can be fully in harmony with the just relations of life, happy, and at peace. They must believe the unmutilated truth, embrace with force and warmth neither more nor less than the genuine will of God. Therefore, as was said before, the work for us to do in respect to our faith is to guard it alike against the deficiencies of scepticism and against the excesses of superstition. The former leaves us in the wild wilderness of being without any guide; the latter gives us a guide who delights to play upon our fears. From these fears there is no escape in the proposed reaction of an extravagant unbelief; for it is a striking fact, that the hardy and boastful denier is often the most credulous of all persons. And we sometimes actually meet with those who, "scouting at the existence of a God, tremble at the curse of a Gypsy, and, while laughing Revelation to scorn, cling to a madman's prophecy." The great want, the only possible deliverance and satisfaction, are to be found in a well-considered and rational faith, equally held from both extremes, and as firm as it is moderate.

Having thus illustrated that faith is represented in the New Testament as of the utmost importance; that it is actually an equally important fact in human life; that it is itself an internal vision and grasp of the spiritual and potential world; that it is a central and necessary feature of our being; that the dangers in relation to it are on one hand a hard, flaw-picking habit of doubt, on the other hand a loose, indiscriminate credulity; and that it should be nurtured with the characteristics of clearness, strength,

and tempered sobriety, — let us next turn to consider the grounds of its validity, the reasons why we should not believe its prophecies delusions, but rather think its indications truths.

Whosoever appreciates what a wise and good man, possessed of a firm and generous belief, derives from it, what it is to him, will be prepared deliberately to assume and maintain the position, that moral and religious faith is worthy, in an unrivalled degree, of being sought and cherished and clung to, even admitting that there is no truth, no outward reality, corresponding to its suggestions. At all events the faith itself is an actual experience, a subjective reality, and as such it is worth more than all other things while it lasts, and when it ends in darkness we shall have no need of any thing. Yes, give us the heroic endeavor, the spiritual grandeur, and the ethereal satisfaction that spring from faith in the fairest, best, and sublimest things, even if we have no more. For if the final fruition shall fail, the faith itself in the mean time is real; and it outshines and outweighs all the prerogatives of sense, all the bawbles of the world. If there be no infinite Justice and Love, no beckoning Heaven for us when this life is over, still it is better to believe there is; better to be wisely and blessedly mistaken with that glorious faith, than to be foolishly and wretchedly right with that appalling unbelief. Granting that the sensible realities of this world are all we shall ever inherit, still how fortunate is he who can steal from so chill and awful a dispensation the profound peace, the inspiring power, and the rapt enjoyment which flow from Christian belief. While he exists, that faith shall be

> "A spell to lure his anxious soul awhile
> From facts that vex to visions that beguile,
> Checkering the darkness of surrounding strife
> With the brief moonlight of a lovelier life";

and when he dies, if that be the end of him, all he derived from his faith was so much clear gain over the unbeliever. Therefore, we say again, let us have faith, even if it be a mistake. Let us have it in preference to truth, for, though it be a delusion, it is a welcome one, dearer far than the reality. Remorseless sceptic, spare our faith! Let us embrace it, toil with it, and die with it. Let it but remain, and we can meet every calamity with resignation and fortitude, rise superior to wrong and failure, nor fear to die, since the skeleton standing at the end of life's road to meet us with uplifted dart is transfigured into the likeness of a friend. A deep, affectionate faith in God, heaven, and immortality, though it be all false, is immeasurably better than unbelief, though it be entirely in accordance with reality. In regard to any other subject than the present, to say that a certain hypothesis, even if untrue, is better than another one, even if true, would be presumptuous rashness and impiety; but not so here, because the infidel theory, the scheme of atheism and annihilation, crushes the very possibilities of good by destroying the supposition of a continued existence under a conscious and just government. The unquestionable experimental superiority of an earnest and liberal belief over the contrasted unbelief, forces the sceptic who supposes the latter to be conformed to absolute truth to maintain that a deception is preferable to a verity; and that is a dilemma utterly irreconcilable with the surest principles and the profoundest instincts of a sound reason and a healthy moral sense.

This thought brings us directly to one of the strongest arguments for the real validity of faith, and opens the consideration of it by asking the question, Is it credible or possible that the reception of a congeries of lies should be necessary to the highest welfare and development of man-

kind? Can it be that falsehood is altogether more desirable and useful than truth? Who can hesitate in answering that inquiry? Gaze abroad through illimitable space, where glittering systems of worlds without number wheel on their dizzy circuits, with exact geometry, age after age, an invincible testimony to an absolute skill and harmony; behold the lowest grades of microscopic being, each displaying in its frame, and in the provisions made for its destiny, as perfect a wisdom, as exhaustless a care, as are lavished on the hugest planet that heaves its enormous bulk about the sky; trace the records of speculative progress and scientific discovery, showing, that, so far as known, the simple reality of things and of morals is everywhere, always, and every way incomparably better than any mistaken hypothesis; examine the mysterious constitution of your own nature and its marvellous mutual adaptations with the world around; — learn to appreciate, in however faint a degree, the infinite knowledge, beneficence, beauty, harmonious adaptation and completeness of the TRUTH, and you will conclude, with instinctive and immovable assurance, that there cannot be in the structure and provided destiny of humanity such a glaring deceit, such a central discord, such a fatal inadequacy, as would be implied by the fundamental falsity of man's faith, the essential mistakenness of his religious intuitions and hopes. When the Ptolemaic system of astronomy was in vogue, Alphonso of Castile, regarding its cumbrous involutions, said, if *that* were the plan of the universe, *he* could have suggested a much better one. Not long afterwards, Copernicus revealed the simple reality of the case; the twisted mass of wheels within wheels,

"Cycle on epicycle, orb on orb,"

fell from the heavens for ever, and left the splendid unity

of the planetary order exposed to the unqualified admiration of men. And who now will dare to whisper of an improvement to the perfection of the astronomic truth? It is so in relation to the faith and destiny of mankind. If there be no kind and compensating Providence over us, and if annihilation be our doom, then any wise man might suggest a vastly better plan; namely, either that we should be made without the capacities, longings, and moral necessities for such a faith, or else that there should be verities corresponding to the faith. The point and force of the consideration may be presented in a word. Unless the great conclusions of faith be true, human theories are superior to the Divine arrangements, the conceptions of man are better than the ideas of God. And that is absurd. Since the truth is more adequate and satisfactory than any erroneous hypothesis everywhere else, it is fair to conclude it so here likewise. The common belief of man, consequently, is legitimate, and to be outwardly fulfilled.

Another argument for the objective validity of faith is contained and urged in a text of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The meaning of that text, fully expressed, as one may see by examining the original words, is this: "Faith is the supporting basis of things hoped for, the demonstration of things not seen." Thus correctly rendered, the passage yields the important thought, that the general *fact* of faith implies the reality of the legitimate objects of faith. Numerous other declarations might be cited to show that it is a prominent Apostolic principle, that faith is its own evidence, testifies to itself that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore that it is unimpeachably true and valid. The capacity for spiritual faith, the universal ability and tendency to believe in such objects as God, regnant justice, compensating provisions, and a future life, is a

marked side of our nature, a distinctive feature and a specific power of our constitution. Acting within its native sphere, under its proper conditions, why is it not as likely to lead to truth as the logical understanding is, or the senses, or any other capacity? Corresponding to the power of sight and the power of hearing in man, there are light and sound in the world. Corresponding to his reasonings, there are mathematical truths, relations among numbers and bodies in space. So, corresponding with the faith with which he is as strikingly endowed, are there not likewise appropriate realities without? As the senses presuppose their material objects, in like manner faith implies its spiritual objects; that is to say, the power of faith being a universal endowment of our nature, and actual faith being the universal concomitant of a certain stage of intellectual culture and moral life, *the veracity of God is pledged* for the correctness of its essential teachings. As the New Testament emphatically announces, faith is the inspiration of God, the testimony of his Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are his children, heirs of eternal life. That is the experimental and the unquestionable ground of the validity of faith. Standing on that ground, with a vivid consciousness of connection between his spirit and the Spirit of God, the petty doubts and difficulties, contemptuous sneers, and artful arguments of unbelievers pass by the Christian as the idle wind, which he regards not. He answers all doubts and repels all assaults by exclaiming, from the exultant fulness of his conviction, "I *know* that my Vindicator liveth, and though decay devour this body, still in my soul I shall yet stand before his throne, and praise him who is the health of my countenance!" That assurance nothing shall ever be able to shake; and it is worth infinitely more than the fame of proudest conquerors and the coronets of richest kings.

The last confirmation of the authenticity, or trustworthiness, of the general moral belief of mankind lies in the undeniable and significant fact, that the greatest and best of men — sages, heroes, saints, and martyrs, — men whose characters and deeds are the wealth of history, the lyric glory of the world, and the funded inspiration of the ingenuous youth of coming generations — were men of a most remarkable degree of faith, were made what they were very much by the depth and fervor of their faith in unseen things. The greater and better a man is, with healthy, well-balanced faculties, the wider, purer, and stronger will be his belief. While all the divine beliefs of the wicked, the sensual, the hardened and thoughtless, fade away and are lost in atheistic scoffs and ribald degradations, the devout faith of the noble, the virtuous, the Christ-like, is similar to direct sight and touch. Could this be so if the objects of faith were unreal? In that case would not the reverse be true? Are the meanest and vilest men really the wisest, most in the counsels of truth? Does all magnanimous aspiration, all noble culture, by leading to faith lead to baseless superstition and falsehood? No; all the grandeur, goodness, and law revealed in nature, in the Scriptures, in the unfathomable mysteries and hopes of the believing heart of man, answer No! Faith is spiritual gravitation. The greater the soul, and the nearer it is to God and all divine things, the more powerfully will these realities make themselves felt. That is to say, a person is loaded with the electricity of truth, charged with faith, in proportion to the magnitude and intensity of his spiritual nature. So, conversely, faith, in proportion to its breadth and fervor, enlarges, purges, and elevates the spiritual nature of the person in whom it dwells. It is, indeed, his faith, communion with an infinitude of immortalities beyond the paltry circuit of his sensual life, that most mag-

nifies man, and makes him tread so regally on the high places of the earth, its sole ruler and its chief ornament. When that faith departs, his crown fades, his kingly crest bows, his spiritual brightness falls from him, his divine faculties are perverted to unworthy uses, he is absorbed in selfishness and sin, he no longer reflects majesty and glory on animal existence and far over the wastes of nature, but is buried in the earth, "like a lighthouse sunk in the sea." Genius and excellence are wings by which great souls soar to the heights of faith. Faith is energy by which earnest souls climb to the heights of genius and excellence. Therefore, if spiritual exaltation is divinely desirable, as every body infallibly knows it is, it irresistibly follows that religious belief is divinely true; for they are correlated, conjoined, complementary.

Every man has his faith, his creed, more or less minute and extensive. Every man, the atheist, the savage, the Hindoo, the philosopher, the saint, believes in something, has a more or less complete and controlling belief concerning the great subjects that cover the province of the unseen and future. Some faith or other upon the pressing problems and phenomena of life and death and revolving nature is, indeed, intrinsically unavoidable, from the very constitution and posture of man. Now the substance of what we advance for the validity of the Christian faith is, that, while some faith is absolutely necessary, of all possible modes of faith this precisely is the most reasonable, harmonious, and satisfactory, is recommended to the soul with a power proportioned to the soul's purity of conscience, keenness of perception, elevation of sentiment, and breadth of experience. What tests could more convincingly prove its truth? Let the thesis be repeated. Every man must have some faith, and some faith must be the true one. The Christian scheme of principles is the most consistent and

clear, the least encumbered by difficulties, and the best sustained by evidence. It is, therefore, the true one, and the one which every man had better have, provided he can get it by honestly seeking the truth. The faith which an earnest Christian has in God, providence, eternal life, and in the connected and collateral topics, we conclude, then, is not only in the profoundest sense perfectly natural, not only an invaluable inward fact to him, but he also has just and reliable grounds of assurance that there are outward realities corresponding to its predictions, into the full experience of which he shall rise when the fleshly tabernacle falls, and he steps forth, a freeman of God, initiate into heaven.

In what has already been said on the different provinces of faith, something has been implied several times concerning its direct, practical *uses;* but that portion of the subject is so important, as to demand a separate and more earnest treatment under distinct divisions. The chief uses of faith are three. The first is no less momentous than to serve as the basis of civilization, to fulfil the great condition of human fellowship. Without faith in each other, and in the binding laws of morality, all government would be impossible; we could not dwell together in safety nor have peaceful dealings together for mutual benefit. Deprived of the general trust and faith which build all civil institutions, and hold together all peoples, the components of society would fall asunder and scatter with as fatal a certainty "as a waterspout, snapped from the attraction of the cloud," crumbles when the whirlwind that lifted it is spent and the terrible magnetism that bound it dissolved. If positive distrust of each other and of the fundamental rules of natural religion were generally prevalent among men, it would bring on a more woful throng of evils than we can easily conceive of,

would bring every thing discordant, treacherous, and detestable. All bonds would break and dissolve; "a spear would be stuck beside each man's couch, and a dagger hid beneath each man's pillow"; the cement of social life would crumble to powder, and the stupendous fabric of civilization drop in pieces. The whole family of disbelief, both in the private household and in the public compact, are a brood of deadly vipers. "O thou serpent, suspicion, coiling coldly round the heart! O thou asp, jealousy, stinging madly to the soul! O distrust, reserve, and doubt, what reptile shapes are ye, poisoning the garden of a world with death among its flowers!"

If the invisible realm which enskirts our life, the great, crowded void of possibilities which inspheres human action, were filled with unbelief, instead of faith, society must cease. The merchant, for instance, embarking his fortune on the waves, letting it circle the globe and pass through the hands of many men he never saw, cannot know but they will cheat him of his all; but he has faith beforehand in their integrity, and without something of that, commerce would come to an end and the nations relapse into barbarism. The parent cannot know but the child he is nourishing will prove a viper in his bosom; but he has an instinctive faith that he will turn out well and be a comfort to his old age, otherwise his careful education and bringing up would be even much less secure. A man cannot know that the neighbor whom he loves and trusts will not betray him, and pierce him to the soul, in the hour of need; but he has faith in the sincerity of his attachment, otherwise no "God bless thee, my friend!" would ever pass between them. Faith in each other, and in a commonly recognized moral law, firmly rooted and prevalent among men as the basis of calculation and action, and the ground of safe reliance, —

faith, that is to say, in the average reality and loyalty of human love, honor, and principle, — is the indispensable condition of civilized society, of public business, and of private friendship. Without this trust, the tale of history would be repeated backwards, the savage scenes that were at first would return, every man's hand be against every man, all the triumphs our race has achieved swiftly fade away, and the earth itself, ere long, be depopulated. Yes, strike faith from human nature and from human affairs, and you would inevitably introduce universal strife, followed by the spreading void of despair and death. Such and so great — without exaggeration, when we think of it well — is the first office of faith, faith in things hoped for and needed, though unseen and impossible to be actually known in the present.

The second use of faith is to give us energy, be the motive-power of life. Faith is the essence and spring of all force, and nothing generous, or lasting, or great, was ever done, but faith was the nourishing root of the performance. What a minute portion of the activity of man is the self-prompted exuberance of inherent energies! Nearly all human effort has prospective reference to results, and thus, involving the elements of futurity and contingency, presupposes the existence and agency of faith. Belief of truth, conscious apprehension, and vital assimilation of truth, is the natural food of the soul without which it would starve. It would literally be found, if we had no faith in unseen realities, distant and spiritual realities impossible to be apprehended save through the power of faith, that our energies would shrivel up, and wither away, and perish; for faith is the absolutely necessary condition of the purposed action of work. Without it we should never form a volition nor lift a finger, except in the thoughtless spontaneity of play. If the sailor had no faith in the compass, the stars, the glad

arrival, his great ships would never sound their way across the deep, but his little skiffs would still hug the shore. If the farmer had not faith in the returning seasons, the favoring elements, and the rewarding crops, he would not turn a furrow nor plant a seed. If the author had not faith that his book would be read, he would never print a page. If the mechanic had not faith that he should receive the wages of his work, he would never touch a tool. If the Christian had not faith that God is the approver of the good, he would make no endeavors to please him. If man had not faith in obligations binding him to act, or in desirable results to follow his action, he would never do any thing intentionally, for a positive effort for an end cannot be made without a motive, and however various that motive may be, it is always based upon faith, is reducible at last to faith. A lack of precisely the faith just named is the cause of the disgraceful and pernicious listlessness of so many idle men among us. A correct analysis of experience does show that faith, an earnest conception of inviting realities and promising possibilities, is the great salient fountain, first of desire, secondly of energy, then of toil, and finally of triumph. Faith in an undiscovered continent beyond the rampant waves and the setting sun, carried Columbus through neglect, poverty, and insult, from court to court, over the sea, through perilous mutiny, to the shore of the New World, and, covered with glory, home again. It was faith in the justice of his cause, and in the felt help of Jehovah, that animated Luther with such terrific power, when Papacy, upon her gorgeous seat, shook, like a coward, before the words of one helpless, honest man. It was faith in God, Christ, and the Gospel, that enabled twelve poor and friendless men to tip the marble gods of Paganism from their thrones, and subdue the earth. "But the time would

fail me to tell" how that every magnanimous enterprise, every heroic endeavor the world has seen, was born of faith, and conquered by faith, or fell through by lack of faith.

Just in proportion as any person, in any sphere of life, under any circumstances, is filled with doubts and misgivings, his efforts are feeble, his days indolent and fruitless, and his grave unhonored. Just in the degree that he is filled with faith, faith in great duties pressing upon him, faith in noble works to be done and worthy rewards to be reaped, — just in that degree, other things being equal, will be the decisive vigor of his resolves, the persevering tenacity of his purposes, the effectual strength of his blows, and the enduring glory of his achievements. A single, puny dwarf, really inspired by faith, will with his indomitable courage and might make an army of doubting giants quail and ignobly flee. Every thing great that has ever been done was done, not by hope nor by knowledge, but by faith; and nothing noteworthy will ever be done except through faith, — faith in some splendid, kindling conception, which the soul grasps in personal consciousness, and burns with, and determines to make visible and present. Knowest thou a man, great and honored, earnestly employed, doing what he does excellently well, enthusiastic in his vocation, the cup of his joys brimful, standing nobly in his place, an example to all the world? Be assured that man's soul is possessed with a vivid faith; he has a controlling, inspiring faith in some great reality; he believes in the importance of the work allotted him, and in the worth of the effects he shall produce. He is a model to be followed. Seest thou a man weak, and uncared for, and of petty purposes, doing only what he is obliged to do, and doing that as poorly as will pass, idly wasting his best opportunities, despondent, and unhappy, for ever sighing, and wishing,

and discontented, and still making no manly attempts to supply his wants and bravely win repose? Be assured, — whatever the outward appearances and pretences are, — that inwardly and really that man's soul is empty and void of all deep and potent faith. He has no rooted faith in the sublime meaning of life; its beauties, joys, possibilities, prizes, near at hand, all around, and stretching through eternity with exhilarating and beckoning promises, — he sees them not, believes not in them. Lift the veil from his eyes, cause a lofty and glowing faith in these things to take him captive, and his spirit would thrill with a keen consciousness and a profound force of life that he has not yet dreamed of. His nerveless torpor and his misery come from want of faith. He does not heartily believe in the soul's indefinite capabilities, the truth's compensating functions, God's hallowing presence, Christ's pleading spirit, the world's inviting privileges, and eternity's admonishing claims. His self-condemning distrust and idle wretchedness are a warning to all men to avoid such a state of mind, — an unbelieving mood, — and seek faith in something grand and inciting, that shall command their aspiration and be worth their toil.

Faith, large, deep, and controlling, is always one of the central secrets of a busy and happy, a successful and glorious career. Sadness, and failure, and disgrace, and ruin, — every awful doom comes directly and alone from lack of faith, from unbelief of the evil we should shrink from, unbelief of the good we should press towards: for such a belief would prompt energetic and unresting labors to gain the great goals and pluck the peerless prizes. If, therefore, you would be any thing, do any thing, worthy the endeavor of a man and the desire of an immortal, have faith in the universal and everlasting prevalence of a LAW which punishes wickedness and sloth, and rewards virtue

and industry exactly as they deserve. This is as sure in the roots of our being, and in the long run, as it is that there is a God, — *it is the same proposition*, — and really to believe it is the salvation of the soul. What is the use of having a God, if he does not see that justice is done throughout his realms? Not sensually, superficially, by convulsions, and glaring momentary projections, but calmly and pervadingly, in the profound and lasting verities of every case, justice is done in all the world of experiencing man, and throughout the universe of Almighty God. To deny that is, first, blasphemy, and then atheism, and, finally, moral ruin. For from doubt of that penetrating truth and sublime law come inefficiency, and unhappiness, and despair; from belief of them spring the motives which give strength, perseverance, and success. If a person heartily believes that every whit of merit he can acquire by omnipotent law draws or contains its proper reward, how can vice and sloth nestle in the borders of his heart? But if he disbelieves it, where are the motives of exertion? O sad and disappointed man! O idle waster of life's mighty boon! whoever you are, whether you sit on a throne, or crouch in a hut, if you would be strong and happy, and fill your days with usefulness, first have faith in God and immortality, faith in spiritual laws the awards of whose omnipresent working are perfect and unavoidable, and then rouse yourself to the ardent prosecution of some noble enterprise, the forming of a hero's character, the living of a saint's life, the winning of an exemplary and beneficent fame; and for your encouragement as you start to commence it, remember that in every great undertaking there are two crises, as there are

> "Two points in the adventure of the diver;
> One — when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge;
> One — when, a prince, he rises with his pearl!"

Faith is the spring of energy, the great motive-power of life. And this is its second office, to keep the faculties of man from palsying and the world from stagnation. Not hope, it is too pale and feeble; not knowledge, it is too small and circumscribed; but vivid, forereaching, all-sufficient faith.

The third use of faith — the final, and perhaps the most important, office of an obedient apprehension of realities beyond the province of knowledge — is to give us peace. In view of the dim throng of mysteries that environ us, hemming us round with indefinable, and sometimes awful shapes, — mysteries which no genius can illumine, no toil penetrate, which press down like a living burden and an iron burden on the meditative and sensitive soul in life's profounder and wooing hours, — we can find repose of mind and contentment of heart only through faith, the simple, confiding trust of a child. Whence came we? Who can remember before he was born? Or who hath gone back where he was, and come again to tell us? It is mystery unfathomable all, which no one can clear up; and if we would not be torn with ceaseless doubts and questionings, tossed by anxious surmises and contradictions without end, we must even bow down in humble faith, and say, "I know but little; I cannot pierce the dread and alluring secrets which enshroud me; but I will trust, will calmly trust in thee, my Maker, and thus find rest."

The fair and varied order of this universal frame, whence did it arise? What makes the bright sea of worlds that rolls over us nightly so beautiful and regular? How were the foundations of the abyss laid, and who capped the temple of immensity? Tell, if thou wert there; explain, if thou canst. But bind, if you may, the coil of your induction round all the innumerable star-strewn domes that

overarch the successive heights of space, still you shall come back and find in every feeling that rises in your breast, in every wild-flower that nods at your foot, mysteries whose oppressive weight shall with difficulty be lifted again from off your soul when once you have awakened to a comprehension of their brooding shadows. Verily there are thousands of things about us which we can by no means *know*. If we try to solve them, the brain reels in the vain grapple with infinite problems, the heart is tormented with perplexities, we are adrift upon a shoreless ocean of uncertainties; and we cannot find shelter and repose until we kneel down in faith and look up in love and cry, "O Lord, thou knowest all, and it is enough; I will obey thee, confide in thee, secure in the faith that thou doest every thing well, and that thou wilt reveal enough for me to know." Then peace soothes the troubled soul, and never before, after it has once been disturbed by haunting speculations upon evil.

To turn to a consideration less confoundingly vast, though of equal concernment to us, it is evident, even to a passing thought, how thickly we are beset by perils known and unknown, both when we wake and when we sleep, and how necessary faith is, to neutralize the perturbations resulting from these exposures. We tread on imminent risks and are engirt by numberless dangers every hour, against the most of which we are, in ourselves, utterly defenceless; but carelessly we labor, and sweetly we sleep, when faith assures us that God is a shield upon our right hand and our left, that the sun shall not smite us by day nor the moon by night. Faith is the very soul and substance of courage, and he that hath it not is the victim of perpetual alarms; and many a man who walks your streets like a

champion is at heart, and especially in his lonely meditations, tremulous and white with coward fear.

And then the natural affections of the heart, clinging to those we love and claiming all sincere and tender sympathies in return, — these would load us with melancholy, and make us hopelessly uneasy and wretched, if we had not faith in the truth and merit of family, friends, neighbors. Trust in the affection of others gives our own that blessed repose and fruition it otherwise could never experience.

Again, there is a multitude of ills and afflictions which all the philosophy in the world cannot remove nor greatly alleviate, but which we are all exposed to and must not unfrequently endure; trials which have ever kept the wailing river of human tears full, and half our race clothed in black; such misfortunes and sufferings as the treachery of friends, the failure of cherished plans, the bereavement of loved ones, the pangs and weary hours of disease. When these sharp and bitter experiences come upon us, — as come upon any of us at any time they may, — no cold, philosophical theories will ever suffice to hush our murmurs and render us contented and cheerful. Nothing but faith can do that; faith in the good providence of God, and the refining influences of adversity, and the full compensations of virtue and of heaven. Verily, verily, the long history of the world affirms, only one thing can make us resigned and happy amid the anguish of our various discipline; and that is the Christian faith that the Father of Lights reigneth, and that he will cause all things to work together for good to them that love and serve him. Amidst all possible desolations,

> "There, in that soft and beautiful Belief,
> Flows the true Lethe for the lips of Grief."

But finally, the strongest illustration of the dependence of peace upon faith is that afforded by the experience of the closing hour of life, and of previous contemplations upon it. In view of our sins, and the swift departure of our years, and the sure approach of the great account, we are the most unfortunate and miserable of all creatures, if we have not faith in the mercy of Heaven. There is not one of us but has committed a great many sins, and omitted a great many duties; not one who, at a tribunal of unforgiving justice, would dare to plead his *merits*. As we review the past, one sad form stands there, with cold and solemn finger, pointing at the beautiful and holy visions that have passed away and left no shadow of their loveliness on the dreary waste of existence; pointing, too, at the impure thoughts, wicked desires, and evil deeds which rise up in thick and threatening array to condemn and frown us down. And with all our short-comings and transgressions on our heads, we are rapidly gliding — are we not? — towards a world where there will be no concealments. Who would not forebode and tremble, if he had not faith in a forgiving God? even in the prodigal's Father, whose bosom yearns, whose arms are open, for all his wandering children. Remembering, as we should, our unworthiness, we shall never know a justified peace until we can say, in faith, "O God, oft have I offended, and very guilty am I in thy sight, but I trust still in thine ample grace. I believe thou wilt accept my penitent tears, and mercifully remove my sins far from me. Thou hast followed me all my days with love, and I trust thou wilt not cast me off, but pardon me, and bear me away in thine arms beyond the reach of mortal sin and care." Faith in the infinite goodness of God is the only sure basis of peace in the soul of erring, feeble, and evanescent man. Nothing but

that faith, fixed and ruling, can make a man calmly face the last seeming foe and hour. For, say what we will, — say what we will, it is a tremendous thing to die! It is a mysterious, solemn thing to die. To leave — perhaps all, for ever. To go — no one knows whither. It is an appalling thing to die. Generations have gone, but there are no footprints of any returning. It is a great and a fearful act to die. To stand upon a verge, where one step forward will plunge the soul into the midst of the infinite unknown, — and *to take that step!* To place the hand upon a curtained pall, the lifting of which will, in the twinkling of an eye, disclose the stupendous secrets of eternity, — and *to lift that curtain.* O, it is a sober thing to die! And we must all do it. One by one, we shall draw the last sigh, and the hands of men will bear us out, to return nevermore. One thing alone will prepare us to meet that event in peace, and go through it in triumph. Do you ask what it is? Even so simple a thing as this. Faith in the teachings of Jesus Christ, our Saviour; faith in the boundless love of God, our Father.

And now, in close, to such as earnestly and sadly desire to have a larger faith than they have yet been able to win, and who would fain throw themselves before the mercy-seat, with tears, praying that most heartfelt of all mortal prayers, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief!" — to them, if any such there be reading our pages, — as introductory to a brief statement of the method of cultivating deeper and more vivid belief, we commend these quaint and touching lines, whose thought and sentiment are as profoundly wise as they are genially religious: —

> "He that wants faith and apprehends a grief
> Because he wants it, has a true belief;
> And he that grieves because his grief 's so small,
> Has a true grief, and the best faith of all."

The process of growth in faith is twofold. First, we must *obey* what we have. To obtain greater faith we must be *faithful* to what we already believe. That will lead right on, from step to step, unto the amplest acquisitions. But from him who neglects the commandments of what he does believe, instead of his believing any more, shall be taken what faith he has. Secondly, we must heartily and perseveringly engage in those spiritual exercises, penitence, thought, prayer, aspiration, which tend to open, quicken, and uplift the soul. To discriminate sounds well, we should cultivate the ear, the organ of hearing. To believe well, we must cultivate — expand and vivify — the soul, the organ of faith.

Faith, then, we have seen, is a central principle of the Christian religion and records; a fundamental element of human life and experience; an inmost necessity and large part of human nature. It is, itself, an inward and electric seizing of invisible things, a spiritual intuition of the reality of things not perceived by the senses, nor logically proved by the mind. It is to be guarded against fanatical zeal on one side, and unreasonable doubt on the other, and preserved at a firm and healthy medium. The grounds of its trustworthiness are its exact adaptation to the obvious arrangements of life and destiny, its implicated necessity to maintain the Creator's wisdom and veracity, and its natural development in consentaneous pace with genius, culture, and virtue. Its uses are to be the bond of society, the motive of labor, and the source of peace. And the secret of its growing possession is fidelity to present convictions, and earnestness of aspiration. It is surely the most precious thing a man can have. In the active and trying days when you need strength, love, and comfort, it will give you what you need. In the hour when houses and lands

and silver and gold are worthless dust, it will be wealth to enrich you, joy to inspire you, wings to bear you eternally up. Cherish it, then, as you would live nobly and die happily. Cherish it, and when all earthly sounds have faded upon your ear, when the great world itself is receding like a dreamy shadow, and your soul is mounting to its God, the blessed tones of your Saviour's voice shall fall out of heaven, saying to you, as when the pardoned sinner heard them with joy in Judea so long ago, "THY FAITH HATH SAVED THEE!"

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DANGER OF BELIEVING TOO MUCH.

By JOHN H. MORISON.

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DANGER OF BELIEVING TOO MUCH.

It is often supposed that in religious matters the danger all lies on the side of believing too little. But this is a false and perilous view of the subject. Whatever dangers we may expose ourselves to from believing too little, and they are neither few nor small, we must expose ourselves to equal or greater dangers from the disposition to believe too much.

In the first place, the disposition to believe either more or less than the truth is a wrong disposition, and therefore dangerous. So far as we allow ourselves to be biased by a predisposition to believe either too little or too much, we are cherishing a spirit of falsehood which is always at variance with the spirit of Christ, and, so far as it is permitted to act, fatal to our moral and religious well-being.

In respect to certain doctrines, they who believe them essential to salvation sometimes say to us, "It can do you no harm to believe them. On your ground, a belief in the Trinity or the Vicarious Atonement is not inconsistent with salvation. But on our ground, unless you believe them, you cannot be saved. Why not, then, come over to us and be on the safe side?" To this we reply, "If, in studying the Scriptures with a conscientious desire to learn the truth,

we come honestly to the conviction that these doctrines are true, then, though the doctrines themselves are false, a faithful adherence to them on our part is essential to our salvation. We cannot but obey the honest convictions of our own hearts. We may be mistaken in our opinions; but the truthful spirit by which we have been guided will commend us to God. He will look down in mercy, and forgive us our unconscious errors and mistakes. But if, — and this is what your reasoning would lead us to, — if, for the purpose of placing ourselves on the safe side of the question, we disingenuously argue ourselves into a belief of these doctrines, then, even though the doctrines are true, they are accursed to us; for we have come to them in a false spirit, and so far hold the truth in unrighteousness."

We cannot, therefore, be safe while under the influence of such a maxim. No prudential motives, even in regard to our everlasting salvation, can with safety be allowed to interfere with the honest action of the mind in its search for religious truth. The question is not, Which is the safe side? but, What is the truth? Every consideration which would turn us aside from this, however disguised under the name and sanctions of religion, is in its nature false. It brings a false spirit into the mind, and so endangers its salvation.

But in the second place, the maxim that there is no danger in believing too much is not only false, and therefore dangerous in itself, even though it should lead us to adopt views which are true, but, as being not a true spirit, it must, almost of necessity, lead us into falsehood. When the mind has received a strong personal bias in a particular direction, it is unfitted for the investigation of truth. He whose feelings are strongly interested for a particular decision is not to be trusted in his conclusions. Our personal

feelings, if we allow them to prevail, distort our intellectual perceptions. How constantly do we see this in private transactions! In doubtful matters, and often where to a disinterested person the case seems perfectly plain, how uniformly do we find men taking ground each on the side which favors his particular interest. It is not that they mean to be dishonest; but a strong personal bias gives undue weight to all the arguments on their side of the question, and unfits them to appreciate the arguments on the other side. So in our search for religious truth. It distorts our intellectual perceptions and perverts our judgment. The disposition to believe too much, once established in the mind as a safe maxim, leads us to receive doctrines on small and insufficient evidence, without regard to what may be said on the other side, and, in short, without regard to their truth. We shall therefore be constantly adopting what is false. Not with a full perception of the falsehood; but through the wrong bias that our minds have taken, we unconsciously impose upon ourselves, and are left to believe a lie.

The disposition, then, to believe too much is not only in itself a false spirit, directly pernicious and dangerous to the soul, but dangerous in its results, leading, as it must, to the adoption of false, and therefore dangerous opinions.

It leads, I have said, to the adoption of false, and therefore dangerous, opinions. Believing too much necessarily implies believing what is false. No one can believe too much, provided that he believes only what is true. The maxim, therefore, which we are examining, rests on the supposition that it is safe to believe what is false, provided only that we believe enough of it. As we cannot be quite sure of the quality, we may be perfectly safe, or at least on the safe side, if we only make up in quantity what is

wanting there. The apothecary cannot with perfect certainty make out the whole prescription. Indeed, he does not think it worth his while to try very carefully. He has a maxim which saves him the trouble. "I shall be on the safe side," he says, "if I only give enough." And thus he puts up his most powerful medicines, the patient is thrown into violent convulsions, — and what is the result? It is so with reference to religious doctrines. If we only believe enough we shall be safe; especially if we believe in the doctrines which do the greatest violence to the natural faculties.

Man is diseased. He has lost his purity, and with it his health and peace. Christ, the great physician of souls, has prescribed for our salvation. But instead of coming to him in meekness and simplicity to learn what he would have us do, we cast aside his words as too simple; we feel as if some more powerful remedy must be sought. We are met at the church door with human creeds and human devices, purporting, indeed, to be of Christ. "Are these," we ask, "the doctrines of Jesus?" "Without them," is the reply, "there can be no salvation. You are utterly corrupt. Nothing short of these violent remedies can save you." "But," we reply, "they seem to us unreasonable, and we cannot adopt them." "Ah!" is the ominous answer, "that is because of the corruptness of the human heart. Human reason cannot understand them." "But we cannot find them in the Gospels." "That," we are gravely told, "is because you are yet unregenerate. While yet blinded by sin, you cannot see them. But this you may be sure of, — unless you believe them, you cannot be saved. If you would be on the safe side, you must receive them, whether you find them in the Scriptures or not; for they certainly are the essential doctrines of Christ." In this

way thousands of heart-stricken sinners are awed into submission, and made blindly to receive doctrines which they never could have found in the Gospel of Christ. May God have compassion upon them, and forgive their weakness.

But is it safe, is it right, for *us* to be drawn in by such motives to the adoption of any religious views? We are able to search the Scriptures for ourselves, to study the New Testament and find what Jesus has taught there as the great, essential doctrines of salvation. And if, instead of going there, we go to human churches and human creeds, half terrified lest, in trusting ourselves to the New Testament, we shall not believe enough, we are placing ourselves in a perilous condition. We are not coming to Christ, as he requires of us, in meekness and humility to learn of him; we are allowing a false, and therefore dangerous, bias to act upon us, and we shall, almost of necessity, be led into false, and therefore dangerous, doctrines.

False, and therefore dangerous, — let me repeat it again. The spirit in which we hold our opinions is, indeed, of more importance to us than the opinions themselves. Still, it is not true that it is of no consequence what a man believes, if he is only sincere in his belief. A man perfectly sincere in the belief that a particular medicine will restore his child's health, may under that conviction administer it and destroy his child's life. A man perfectly sincere in the belief that he is steering a ship through the channel, may yet drive her on a rock, and destroy the lives of all on board. A man perfectly sincere in the belief that the world is coming to an end on a particular day, may induce thousands to leave their regular occupations, neglect their families, waste their property, while some are driven to insanity, some to suicide, and others by the reaction of their

minds become infidels for life. Is it then of no consequence what a man believes, if he is only sincere? Are false doctrines any the less pernicious in their effects on that account? In one point of view, the sincerity with which we hold our religious opinions is that which gives them power, whether for good or for evil; and just in proportion as we are faithful to the false doctrines that we hold, will be their evil influence over us. It is impossible to point out the thousand ways in which our religious convictions, if we hold them sincerely, react upon our minds and mould our characters. Let us, for example, believe in the Romish doctrine of absolution; that, by paying a certain amount of money, we may be absolved from all our sins. Let this doctrine be thoroughly incorporated into our minds, and it must of necessity break down all just distinctions in morals, and make a perfect wreck of our moral natures, unfitting us for salvation here or hereafter.

In this respect, then, it is a most dangerous doctrine, that in our religious opinions we are on the safe side if we only believe enough. Believing what is false destroys the efficacy of what is true. Believing the doctrine of priestly absolution, as held at the time of the Reformation, destroys the efficacy of a true repentance and reformation. Believing the extreme doctrine of justification by faith alone without works, destroys the efficacy of all those divine precepts of our Saviour in which deeds of charity and righteousness are enjoined. Believing the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and narrowing down the meaning of faith to the particular articles of a sectarian creed, is to destroy the efficacy of every thing most essential to the life of God in the soul and of man among his fellow-men. It perverts every right sentiment of justice. It takes away all that is most lovely in the character and office of Jesus.

It throws clouds of blackness around the throne of the Almighty, and cuts off all those portions of the sacred writings which appeal most tenderly and most powerfully to our hearts. In short, it must, if sincerely believed and carried out, — this narrow and false doctrine of justification by faith alone must utterly destroy not only man's moral agency, but all the most essential doctrines of the Gospel itself. And yet this is on the safe side of believing too much! It consists in employing one doctrine of Christianity, in swelling it out beyond all bounds, till it has perverted or annihilated every other portion of the sacred writings, and made the souls of those who receive it as narrow, as unlovely, and as barren as itself.

While, therefore, in believing too much, we destroy the efficacy of the true and vital doctrines of Christianity, we annihilate those life-giving doctrines, and in fact believe not too much, but too little. We believe, for example, with extreme High-Churchmen and Roman Catholics in receiving the saving ordinances of religion through a particular priesthood, and through them alone. Baptism and the Eucharist, they tell us, are essential to salvation, and they can be administered only by a particular order of priests. It certainly seems like believing a great deal to believe this. But in reality it is believing altogether too little. It is giving up that broad Christian belief, that the mercy of God, through Christ, is ready everywhere to forgive the sinful who repent and turn to him. It is narrowing down the Christian belief in this broad and blessed doctrine of God's infinite mercy, and substituting in its place a little, conceited retort of human vanity and falsehood. It is as if, in some great stream on the borders of which a million of people dwell, by whose waters they are all refreshed and fed in a thousand ways, a lead pipe of a particular workmanship

were introduced, and we were solemnly told that, unless we consent to receive the water from this little and half-poisonous tube, we must certainly perish. We may believe in the whole stream from its source to the sea, and in the ten thousand ways of appropriating its waters for the benefit of man; but unless we reject all that, and believe exclusively in this one little tube, as the only appointed means of reaching the water, our creed is too scanty. We do not believe enough. But if we believe in that, then we have a large faith. That is, the largeness of our faith is directly in proportion to the smallness of what we believe. So it is in respect to every one of the exclusive doctrines which the different sects have monopolized, and which they hold out as the only exclusive means of salvation. The whole river of God, — the waters of salvation, — are flowing by us. A divine voice is calling, Ho, every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters, and whosoever will, let him come and partake freely! But that will not do. Unless we take the water of life from their particular tube, it can have no efficacy. Thus our faith is limited to the narrowest compass, and, believing so much, we have almost ceased to believe at all in the unlimited mercy and goodness of God.

It is remarkable that almost every one of the great truths of the Gospel is designed, not to narrow down, but to enlarge, the faith of the world. The justice, goodness, loving-kindness, and tender mercy of God, before dimly unfolded, or confined to particular temples or people, are by our Saviour declared in the most unqualified and absolute terms, and for every people under heaven. The doctrine of man's immortality, the spiritual worship which is enjoined, the terms of acceptance with God, are stamped by the unrestricted universality of the divine mind. When, therefore, theologians come in to restrict what Christ has left so large, and to

bind the offers of salvation to the ritual of this church or the creed of that, and we are told that the only safety is in believing enough, I reply, that for that very reason, among others, I cannot accept their terms. They do not allow me to believe enough in God and in Christ. They would shut out the whole heaven of our religion, sun and stars, and have us trust entirely to the tapers which they have lighted within their darkened temples.

The great doctrines of salvation are broad and free. They come home to the humblest heart, and are comprehended, so far as is essential, by the simplest minds. If we once give them up for any system of man's device, we are lost. There is nothing safe but the spirit of truth. If we have that, and prayerfully strive in thought and life to live up to its teachings, we cannot be cast away. Even if we make great mistakes, and our works, tried in the fire, shall be burned, we may suffer loss indeed, yet we ourselves shall be saved. But if we permit any other motives, such as the fear of believing too much or too little, to influence us, we are not honest followers of Christ, and cannot hope for his approbation. We are seeking a way of our own, instead of following in his steps. No; — we must not dare either to take away or add to what is true, though all the teachers in the world should desire it. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life."

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FORGIVENESS.

By ANDREW P. PEABODY.

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FORGIVENESS.

Among Christian doctrines, none takes precedence of forgiveness of sin in the New Testament. None is so entirely lost sight of in the creeds of Christendom, which seem as if they were purposely constructed so as to exclude the idea or possibility of the Divine pardon. Thus the Romanist applies the name of forgiveness to that which is earned by good works; but pardon cannot be earned. Various sections of the Reformed Church regard forgiveness as something purchased by the payment of an equivalent for man's deficiencies in Christ's obedience, or for man's due punishment in Christ's sufferings; but a purchased immunity is not forgiveness, — pardon and price are incommensurable terms. Among Liberal Christians, there are many who seem to take Combe's Constitution of Man for their Gospel. They maintain that every action must draw after it its full result and entire retribution; that the law of cause and effect remains undisturbed in the spiritual, as in the outward world; that a man must reap as he sows, and all that he sows; and that penitence is availing, only as it constitutes a new moral cause, which must in time produce its proportionate effect, and introduces a new order of permanent moral causes of its own kindred, which must have a permanent and increasing influence.

Now these views are all defective, rather than false. The Romanist is right in regarding good works as the condition of salvation, though wrong in supposing that they can earn forgiveness for one's self or others. The Calvinist is right in deeming Christ's obedience and suffering a prolific source of spiritual benefit to man, though unsupported, as I think, by the tenor of Scripture, or by a single passage as interpreted by its context, in assuming the mercantile idea of a price paid and a pardon bought. The Unitarian is right in applying the law of cause and effect to the spiritual world, though wrong in supposing that all moral causes are equally capable of being traced and analyzed by a finite mind, and in ignoring the Divine forgiveness as the most potent and influential of those causes. Combe's Constitution of Man is a good book, so far as it goes, and would not be an unchristian book, if it did not profess to tell the whole truth. But it stops where the Gospel begins. It expounds the Divine law; but is silent as to the Divine redemption. It unfolds the theory of righteous retribution; but suppresses the still more essential theory of pardon.

Forgiveness, as I have intimated, is seldom held and represented as a distinct article of Christian belief, but is confounded, sometimes with remission of punishment, sometimes with the natural tendency of virtuous effort, sometimes with the conferment of heavenly happiness. In fine, it is identified with the consequences of actions, rather than with the relations of the moral agent. But in its Scriptural acceptation, it defines simply the existing relation between God and the human soul. Punishment might be remitted, yet the soul remain unforgiven. Retribution might have its full sweep, yet the soul be forgiven.

I may perhaps best illustrate the doctrine under discussion by an analogy drawn from the human family. Suppose a father, who is all that a father ought to be. He is

incapable of anger; and never for a moment wills the pain or injury of his children, but always their highest good. He has no passions to gratify by punishment. But he loves goodness above all things else; and his own purity of heart makes him painfully sensitive to the presence, continuance, and increase of evil. The promotion of goodness is therefore the prevailing aim of his parental administration. He has a stubborn, wayward, vicious son. The mutual relations of the father and son are essentially modified by the son's character. Though the father pities the son, he has no sympathy with him. He regards him, though with tenderness, with untempered disapproval, nay, with righteous indignation. He is conscious of a wide gulf between him and his child. And the son has a corresponding consciousness. He takes no enjoyment in his father's society. He feels alienated from him, — when absent, forgets him, — when with him, occupies the attitude of indifference or defiance. In fine, the natural kindred is more than balanced by a mutual antipathy of spirit, from which neither party can recede, unless the father ceases to be good, or the son makes himself vile no longer.

The son, we will suppose, repents, changes his disposition and purposes, determines to lead an obedient and virtuous life. From the moment when that change begins, while reformation is in its incipient stage, while bad habits still cling, though with a dying grasp, and the iniquity of his heels still compasses him about, the father's relation to him is reversed. There is now approval, sympathy, confidential intercourse, spiritual kindred, the free inflow of the father's spirit into the child's. And this altered relation is forgiveness. It matters not what course the father's superior wisdom prompts him to take for the child's good. He may think it best to admit the penitent son at once to all the outward immunities and privileges that he had forfeited, and to leave nothing on his part that can serve as a

memento of the son's former mode of life. Or, on the other hand, he may deem it essential to the son's rapid reformation and permanent good, that in some form or way, and for a limited time, he should feel the consequences of his waywardness; and if so, his permitting these consequences to take effect, so far from being inconsistent with forgiveness, is part and parcel of forgiveness, which otherwise would be less genuine and entire.

But what effect has this alteration on the son's future course? His reformation is immeasurably more rapid and thorough than it would be had he the same good purposes, and no father, or a less virtuous father, or a father who was still angry with him, or a father who had felt the same towards him in his waywardness that he does now. The restoration of his father's confidence, sympathy, and approval is a powerful motive to goodness, — an accelerating moral force, — an invaluable means of self-discipline and progress. It blends with his every moral effort, — is an ever-present rebuke to the bad passions which he had indulged, and a constant incentive to duty and progress.

We will now apply this analogy to our relation with God. Take the case of an impenitent sinner; it matters not whether of one whom the world brands with that name, or of one who, faithful in his human relations, leads as to the spirit a fatherless life, is non-religious or irreligious. God loves him, pities him, seeks his good, is not angry with him, as men count anger. But he regards him with unmitigated disapproval and displeasure. He beholds in him no marks of his own spiritual lineage and kindred. He looks upon him as a self-exiled rebel, as a self-bereaved orphan, as a self-doomed outcast from the mansion in the Father's house made ready for him. And what a horrible position is this for a human being to occupy! To know that the benignant eye of the Omniscient is ever upon him, that it marks his course and rests upon his soul with-

out a glance of consent or approval, that it recognizes him only as an alienated being, in wrong relations, under the sway of wrong motives, pursuing wrong ends, — to feel that he must be for ever under that inspection, nearer to God than to any finite being or object, yet morally separated from him by a barrier as wide as the universe, — O, can there be a deeper hell than this? Can the prayer, "Father, forgive!" involve the remission of a more fearful doom? No mortal can feel this consciousness to the full, and remain as he is. Most of those who ought to cherish it drown in worldly care or pleasure all sense of the Divine presence, shut out the very thought of God, if not from the intellectual, at least from the emotional nature, and seek refuge in that worst form of infidelity, in which the heart says to the head (and I believe that the head never says so to the heart), "There is no God." Others brace themselves up to the attitude of fierce defiance and open rebellion, like the embattled hosts of fallen angels, "who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms." But the deliberate consciousness of this alienated position is the first step towards a change. It is the only true conviction of sin, — the only germ of a repentance not to be repented of. A perception of the consequences of sin, even a profound sense of its retribution in eternity, is of little avail. Multitudes of the most depraved are more fully aware of all this than their religious monitors. But let one be brought clearly and prolongedly to regard himself as under the unqualified displeasure of the ever-present God, — let him say in his heart, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight," — he must repent.

This repentance is a change of mind, a change of purpose, a change of moral direction. The penitent hates what he loved before, and loves the objects of his former hatred or indifference. His aims are now right, his moral efforts rightly directed, his will in accordance with the

Divine will. And God now regards him with approval, with complacency (if we may borrow a term more strictly applicable to man), with sympathy. This new relation on God's part, this aspect of the Divine countenance never turned to him before, is forgiveness. Before, though unpunished, he was unforgiven. Now, punished or not, he is forgiven. The fact that he is forgiven determines nothing with regard to the consequences of his past sin, or rather determines simply this, — that retribution will extend so far as his spiritual good demands, and no farther. If it be best for him that the malign causes previously at work be frustrated of the residue of their consequences, they will instantly cease, and he will be henceforward in his own experience, as he already is in the Divine regard, as though he had never offended. If it be best for him that these malign causes shall have their full effect, reaching even beyond the present life, his must be an alloyed and clouded happiness till they have spent their force; yet he will be none the less forgiven. If it be best for him that these malign causes should operate but partially, and should altogether cease at death, he will bear the life-long scars of the old wound-marks; yet will be as much forgiven while they last as when they disappear.

But the most momentous of all things for the penitent is that he have a clear consciousness of pardon, — of the Divine approval and complacency. This assurance will make him happy, immeasurably beyond the power of all things else to mar his peace. If the Father's arms are only open for the returned prodigal, he can cheerfully take his place among the hired servants. Nay, if he must for a season crouch among the swine, and feed upon their husks, it is enough for him that he is a child, pardoned, accepted, beloved, and the very husks will seem to him as angels' food.

But most of all, the consciousness of pardon is precious as a motive force. The sentence, "Thy sins be forgiven

thee," can alone give power to the mandate, "Go and sin no more." He whose resolutions are good, but who moves on with the consciousness of the Divine displeasure, must move haltingly, and under painful discouragement. There can be no alacrity in his obedience, no vigor in his progress, no energy to wrestle down the evil that he hates, or to do the good that he loves. He is a cripple and a laggard on the race-ground. He lies, like the impotent man at Bethesda, waiting for the moving of the waters. But the consciousness of the Divine approval is the prime fact in the penitent's moral being. It inspires him with fresh and growing courage and energy. It quells temptation, and conquers sin. It enters as the most potent of all moral causes into his inward life. Let other causes still work, its force is culminating, while theirs is expiring. Its effects outnumber, outweigh, transcend, supplant theirs. They become what the foul exhalations of the night are, when flooded and overborne by the sunlight and the morning breeze. The soul, thus assured of pardon, feels its weakness reinforced by Omnipotence. "I am not alone, but the Father is with me," is thenceforward the epitome of its life-experience.

Thus is forgiveness less an end than a means. It holds the first, not the last, place in the development of the spiritual life. It is not a gift reserved for heaven, but the earliest ripe of "celestial fruits on earthly ground." With this, the soul can cast aside all fear as to the future, nay, can dismiss all painful questionings as to the length of the shadow which early guilt may cast; for to the pardoned soul there can be no needless penalty. If the past have its consequences in the future, they can be suffered only so long as they are needed to sustain humility, watchfulness, and diligence.

Such, then, is the Christian doctrine of forgiveness. As I said at the outset, it is in all creeds kept too much in the

background. People have always preferred to discuss the outside facts, the mere machinery of the spiritual life. The nature and extent of retribution have always taken the place in the regard of the Christian Church, which the simple idea of pardon ought to hold. But the most important question for us all, at any and every moment, is, How stand I beneath the Divine eye? How does God regard me? Have I his approval, his favor? The very word RELIGION points to this as the fundamental question. It denotes *relation*, and, in its current use, *our relation to God.* We all of us live alike, with hardly an exception, too much in the outward world. This externality of living is the fountain-head of all sin. It is this, too, that leads Christians, to so great a degree, to locate spiritual ideas in the future, and to discuss their own and one another's fitness for heaven, rather than their present relation to God. But could the veil be for one moment withdrawn, — could the Divine presence seem as near as it will when our disembodied spirits shall look upon the open countenance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, — we should see that we stand before Him now in the same position in which we expect to stand at some far-off day of judgment. We should not even think of the future, but only of the all-momentous present, which involves infinite possibilities of future joy or woe. The Divine displeasure alone would seem the lowest hell; the Divine approval alone would make it heaven all around us, and all before us. Are we unforgiven? Are we pardoned? Does that omnipresent eye condemn or sanction, disown or approve? Are our desires, aims, tendencies, such that we must confess, "The withering frown of God rests upon my path"? Or are they such that we can say, "Father, I know that I am striving and tending whither thy love invites and accompanies me"?

As I have intimated, forgiveness may admit or exclude any consequences of past sin, though it implies absolute

safety, the precise discipline that we need, and growing, and ultimately perfect happiness. The safety is ours from the moment that we are conscious of forgiveness; and to that consciousness we are entitled, if our desires and aims are Godward and heavenward. The discipline that we need, the degree of happiness in reserve for us, is the subject in part of experience, in part of express revelation. That, when sinful habits have been deeply rooted, and of long continuance, their consequences outlast repentance and forgiveness, is a fact of undoubted experience. Yet I believe that in this regard experience falls very far short of the mechanical theories of those who parade the law of cause and effect as the supreme law of the spiritual universe. In the present life, the consequences of repented sin vanish more rapidly, and more entirely, than could be calculated by any system of theological arithmetic; for while we can estimate the disastrous effects of sin, the peace of God which rests upon the pardoned soul passes all understanding, transcends in its fulness and its fruits all human measurement, and may flood with heaven's own purity and blessedness the spirit, which, in theory, ought still to be immersed in the cloud, and reeling under the burden of old iniquity.

There remain certain questions with regard to the future life, closely connected with, though not necessarily involved in, the doctrine of forgiveness. How can we retain our identity in a future state, and yet not suffer there even from repented sin? Suppose that we cannot say how. It is the province of revelation, not to solve problems, but to disclose facts. The laws of being, in both and all worlds, involve much which the finite, or at least the earth-bound soul, cannot comprehend. But as to the facts in this case, revelation is clear. The promise of perfect happiness in heaven for the pardoned penitent is unqualified and full. Nothing can be more unscriptural than the theory which

would make heaven like the present life, the scene of conflict, and possibly of painful discipline, or would infuse a single drop of bitterness into the cup of eternal joy. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Do we know not how? Perhaps not. But do we know how the dead are raised, and in what bodies they come? Eternal, spiritual life is in itself a mystery, familiar to our contemplation, and regarded as intrinsically credible only because in this one Christian idea our souls have been bathed from infancy. But this stupendous fact of immortality, however sustained by collateral analogies, has revelation for its only basis. We believe it, because he who came from the bosom of the Father declared it, exhibited it at the gate of Nain and among the sepulchres of Bethany, and bore about its evidence in his own resurrection-body. On the same authority we receive the assurance of perfect happiness in heaven for the penitent.

Yet the heaven which Christ has revealed attaches reward and prerogative to early, devoted, and rapidly growing piety, over late repentance and imperfect sanctification. In the kingdom of the redeemed there are the least and the greatest, — those who are saved as through fire, and those who wear almost visibly the amaranthine crown before their ascension-robes are ready. And we can easily conceive how this may be, and yet all be happy. The remaining sins of the penitent may, in heaven, be imperfections, not sins. There may be virtues of which they carry hence only the budding germ, to be brought into bloom and fruitfulness in the heavenly garden. Because they enter the higher life thus imperfect, they must move onward with a tardier gait, and soar with a feebler flight. They must sustain an appreciable loss, in comparison with the more faithful. Yet, in the absence of scorn and envy,

in the perfect harmony and love that pervade the celestial republic, these distinctions may be acquiesced in without pain, and those on the lowest plane may feel unutterable joy in the distant contemplation of heights of attainment within their future scope, though they are heights which they might already have reached, and passed, had their earthly life been marked by earlier and more active piety.

It is evident, on the most cursory thought, that men must enter heaven with widely different capacities for happiness. There dies to-day, we will suppose, a sincere penitent of fourscore, who, within the year now waning, has in deep contrition consecrated to God powers perverted and affections debased by a long life of sin, has loved God and goodness with all the heart that was left in him, and has pursued the way of duty with what shattered strength of body and mind remained to him. Side by side with him, there passes to the gates of heaven one whose youth and age have been alike holy, and when he dies, all the ways of Zion mourn, and the ark of the covenant droops, because his hand is no longer beneath it. Now, in order for these two persons to enjoy the same kind and degree of happiness, the nature of the one must be arbitrarily changed, while the other merely takes the place for which he is already fitted, so that the former would receive a positive reward for his protracted impenitence. The one has less than an unperverted child's capacity for spiritual happiness; the other is ready to sweep an angel's harp, and to fill an angel's sphere. Each may receive the kind and amount of happiness of which he is capable, and both may be perfectly happy; while yet, could their respective conditions be laid open to mortal view, the contrast between them might appear vast enough to arouse to energetic effort all that are at ease in Zion, to make the procrastinating halt no longer, and to wield an immense influence in behalf of early piety, the most scrupulous watchfulness,

and the most conscientious diligence in every walk of duty.

But now recurs the question, If memory remain entire, how can we fail to suffer in heaven from the remembrance of early sin?

In the first place, our retaining no trace of sin in our characters may render its remembrance no longer a source of sorrow. What makes us feel it the most painfully in this world is the difficulty of so entirely subduing it, that it shall not creep in upon us unawares, — attack us when off our guard, — when vanquished, and, as we think, slain seven times over, rise in its crippled strength, and, if it cannot bruise the head, wound the heel. Now, as character is the substratum of consciousness, the entire eradication of sin from the character may render our self-consciousness widely different from what it is, while the least fibre of sinful desire or habit remains to be plucked up, or the feeblest shoots put forth, and demand to be broken off with incessant watchfulness and care.

Then, again, in this life we are thrown more upon the resources of memory than we can be in the life to come. As to our earthly condition, repeated miscalculations and disappointments damp all the ardor of hope before we get midway in our career. Our position becomes fixed. Essential change for the better grows improbable; and if a lengthened future is before us, it has many certainties of bereavement and suffering too painful for us to look upon. In fine, decrease and decline are the necessary law of human life after it has passed its meridian. Thus, as we float down the current, back-water is perpetually setting in upon our vessel. And not only from the forecast shadows of coming events, but from the present also, we must often turn away in doubt, apprehension, or grief. At such times, if we have an inheritance in heaven, we look into the celestial future; but our regards can rest on nothing future

this side of heaven. As to earthly things, the inevitable tendency is to look back to the fuller, brighter, happier (as we are prone to deem them, though as to the essentials of true felicity they ought not to be the happier) days of our early life; and, if sin has left its shadow there, the mind cannot help resting painfully upon it. Then, too, how many outward associations are there of place and circumstance to remind us, so long as we live here, of sin that we may have forsaken and outgrown! But this cannot be in heaven. There we shall find ourselves surrounded by associations which suggest no remembrance of evil, — by scenes on which no shadow of guilt has ever rested. There, too, no clouded future can throw the thoughts back upon by-gone experiences, — no disappointments lowering before us can draw from us the cry, "O that I were as in months past!" With a present inexhaustible in its resources for improvement and happiness, with a future opening before us faster than we can avail ourselves of its opportunities, gird ourselves for its duties, and anticipate its joys, this backward cast of the mental vision can no longer be habitual, but there must rather be a forgetting of those things which are behind, as we reach forth unto those things which are before.

I have thus presented what seems to me the sound and Scriptural view of forgiveness, its nature, its consequences in the life that now is, and in that which is to come. I apprehend that there is a growing tendency to ignore religion, that is, the science of spiritual relations, in preaching. In some quarters I hear the complaint, — "We have faithful exhortations, clear exhibitions of moral duty, pungent appeals to the conscience in behalf of the obligation of self-discipline, self-culture, benevolence, and philanthropy; but we hear very little about another world, a realm of spiritual being, retribution, pardon, eternity." Now this preaching about earthly things, however sound, is of little

or no avail. It presents, indeed, the mechanism of the religious life in perfect order, but without its motive power. The wheels are all in place and gearing, but the fire has gone out in the furnace.

There never was an age when there was so much ostensibly faithful preaching as now. Yet practical Christianity seems on the decline. Worldly interests are made supreme and engrossing, to a degree unknown before. Social evils, that were checked for a season, are flowing back upon us in full tide. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. All this is chargeable in great measure to the fact, that in the preaching of our times there is more Law than Gospel, more fear than love, more Judaism than Christianity. Law, of itself, is pitifully weak. Its clearest, most faithful exhibitions are like the aurora borealis, which may make night hardly less brilliant than day, but cannot shed a single warm ray upon the frosty autumnal air.

"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; therefore loveth she much." "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Such was the preaching by which Jesus sought to draw all men unto him. Let the Christian pulpit be first of all consecrated to the ministry of reconciliation, — to the preaching of repentance and forgiveness. Let those who serve at the altar make it their chief and constant aim to hold forth the Divine mercy for the remission of sins, and thus, in Christ's stead, to beseech men to be reconciled to God. Then shall the records of their ministry be transcribed in full into God's book of remembrance, — the Lamb's book of life.

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"NO PROFESSED RELIGION."

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"NO PROFESSED RELIGION."

"I HAVE no professed religion. With all the world, I think I will have one some day, when I have nothing else to do but to grow old and become religious, and thus to save my soul in time to die."

Thus wrote a popular editor of a secular print, not many years ago. And this was said, not in a light or trifling tone, but soberly, as if it came from the heart, or at least the intellect, of one who knew he needed religion, and intended to get it before he died, "as all men do." Here is a confession; and one that is of value, both in its positive and negative character. It betrays an idea of religion and salvation which is probably very common, but which we believe to be as erroneous and pernicious as the Calvinistic doctrine of Election, or the Romish doctrine of Indulgence. And as we also believe that this error is as prevalent in our own denomination as in any, we are anxious to expose it, so far as we may in a few pages. We use the terms "professed religion," "professors," or "non-professors," in the popular sense, not because we like them, but because they are in common use, and are understood.

And, to be definite, we take this position. To have "no professed religion" is not to escape obligation, but *to incur*

danger. For, beside the perils that beset us all, here are peculiar perils, springing from the assumption of peculiar safety; and this safety consists in avoiding obligation by avoiding profession. Here is a cluster of errors and dangers, pertaining not alone to an ordinance or an act, but to the whole of religion and life. Men who thus reason seem to say, that the service of God is a contract; that obligation is optional; that doubtful or sinful indulgences are neither sinful nor doubtful, unless we choose to say they are; that the work of religion may be safely left until all other work is done, and may be begun and finished when we have nothing else to do — but to grow old and die. Such reasoning is very trite, and to most minds must carry its own refutation. But all the more may its danger be hidden. See it as it is, thou who art exposed to its self-delusion.

1. You say, — "The service of God is a contract. It asks of me so much time and strength, for so much reward. If I accept the terms, I may choose my own time for rendering the service. I may do it in youth, manhood, or age. If I do it before dying, or when dying, the contract is fulfilled, and the reward is mine." Stop, my friend; you are mixing truth with error; and what is worse, you are confounding service with selfishness. It is true that you may take your own time, and begin the work now, or never. You are perfectly free. Your freedom is not only unquestionable, it is unbounded. It is awful. You may use or abuse every faculty, every privilege, all truth, all life. You may destroy yourself, body and soul. You may serve or mock Him who gave you body and soul. If this is what you mean by a "voluntary service," you are right. But the "contract" is another thing. God makes no contracts. He bestows gifts innumerable; but they are all of grace, not

of debt. They have conditions; but those conditions are not arbitrary, but inherent and absolute. Over these conditions you have no power, except that of accepting or rejecting them altogether. For they pertain to the soul; and may be expressed by gratitude, reverence, obedience, love, usefulness, holiness. Now if you substitute for these the very opposite, — a sordid, selfish calculation of so much reward for so much work, or rather no work at all, but a mere consenting in the end to accept the reward, — it is little to say you are in danger. You are in sin; and you are incapable of receiving a reward, which belongs wholly to the state of the affections, the character and life.

2. You say, — "Obligation is optional. If I assume it, I am bound; but if I promise nothing, and profess nothing, I am free." This plea is so weak and false, when put into words, that no one, perhaps, will own it as his. Yet we often hear it expressed in some form, and multitudes act upon it, whether they believe it sound or not. Many know it is not sound. So much the worse. When men deceive themselves by their own shallow sophistries, knowing them to be such, there is little use in reasoning with them. But if there are any who really think the plea a good one, we have some questions to put to them.

On what do you build religious obligation? On the will and caprice of man, or the will, the perfections, and the goodness of God? If the latter, obligation is not optional, but natural: standing in the nature of things, existing always and everywhere, and limited only by capacity. Again, on what do you rest the duty of a child to obey and serve his parents? or what would you think of the creed and conduct of a son, who should say he was under no obligation to obey or serve his father, because he had never promised or professed to do it? The question calls for no

answer; but we leave you to apply it to yourself, to man, as the creature of such a Creator, the child of such a Father, as God. Again, how do you determine the duty of a subject, or citizen, to the state? And how, in your opinion, should the state deal with the man who refuses to obey its laws because he has never read them, or never professed to believe in them? If you answer severely, look well to your own relation to the Moral Governor of the universe, and your reasons for withholding or postponing your compliance with the precepts of your Lord and Saviour. Clearly, religious obligation stands upon the same basis as natural, social, and civil obligation; with only the difference of higher sanctions and infinite issues. Every member of a religious community is under a weight of obligation, which can be neither lessened nor increased by words or forms; and his not using special words or forms is no better excuse for the neglect of any religious duty, than the same would be for a disregard of domestic or civic duties. Every believer in the religion of Christ, every worshipper in a Christian church, is under as solemn obligations to comply with the requisitions of Christ, and to be a faithful Christian, as any man is to be a faithful citizen, husband, father, son, or brother. Moreover, if any religious service or Christian rite will secure or promote our fidelity to natural relations and social duties, that rite, that service, becomes in the best sense obligatory, and in the highest way *essential.*

3. You say, — "Indulgences and pleasures that become doubtful, and may be sinful, after a public recognition of Christian obligations, are quite allowable so long as I have no professed religion." As there can be but one ground on which you venture such an assertion as this, we will waste no time upon any other. "People think so, — every body says so." This is the ground of your assertion. And this

you *profess* as your rule of action! We cannot but admire its elevation, and your courage and consistency. Are we to infer that you are governed by this rule in all your conduct? or is it only God that you serve in this way, and religion alone in which you thus judge? You would not say to a man whom you had cheated, "I never promised not to cheat you." If arraigned in a court of justice for dishonesty or theft, you would hardly think of pleading in extenuation, "I have not yet joined the church." Should you by any accident, by the force of custom, or on the plea of gentility, use wine to excess and shame, would you vindicate it the next day by saying, "I have no professed religion"? Perhaps you would. To be consistent, you should. Many do, if not in these words, in ways that mean this, if they have any meaning. Not a few allege, in regard to frivolity, intemperance, profanity, and sensuality, that the sinfulness of these indulgences, at least the degree of it, is a matter partly of social convention and partly of religious profession. We have known it to be given as a reason for not making a "profession," that it would require the relinquishment of some indulgence, the control of some appetite or habit, that now are thought venial, or not noticed. What "people think," and what they "would say," determine the virtue or vice.

Now, the most we have to say of those who thus reason and act is, that, in our opinion, they are weaker sinners, and in greater danger, than even the frailest of those frail disciples who declare their faith in higher principles, and their desire and purpose to live as Christians, but sometimes deviate and fall. To resolve well, to own our unworthiness, our weakness, and need of blessing, calling to our aid the witness of God, the fellowship of Jesus, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, will both strengthen every right principle,

and make imperfections and errors less sinful — certainly not *more* sinful — than if these imperfections and errors are allowed, without any attempt to prevent them, and with a false excuse for their continuance. We look with more respect and more hopefulness on the humble follower, however far behind his Master, still bearing up and moving on, penitent for sins and ever renewing his vows and efforts, than on the bold sinner, the thoughtless trifler, or the prudent procrastinator, doing nothing with a high aim or earnest endeavor, and feeling "safe," because "professing" nothing! No one can be safe who is doing evil, or allowing himself in that which weakens moral principle, or exposes to moral danger. And doubly does he sin who seeks to palliate a vice by the neglect of a duty.

4. You think the work of religion may be left till all other work is done, and then you will be able to "save your soul in time to die." Whether lightly or soberly uttered, there is something in such language that is revolting. What idea can a man have of the soul, or salvation, who will thus talk and thus act? It betrays either fearful insensibility or gross ingratitude, — the absence, certainly, of all genuine humility, penitence, right appreciation of our spiritual nature and the goodness of God. If such a state of mind places its reliance on the chances and efficacy of a "death-bed repentance," we will hold no argument with it. If the reliance is upon a mere "profession," whether in life or death, it shows a total misapprehension of the nature of that ordinance and relation with which the term "profession" is usually associated.

And this it is, we suppose, that lies at the bottom of all the errors and absurdities we have noticed. Let the nature of a church, and the design of its ordinances, be rightly understood, and men would not think, either of evading

obligation by keeping away from the church, or of saving the soul by entering the church at the last hour. Let church ordinances be viewed as means, not as an end; means and helps to bring the soul into such communion with Christ, and such spiritual comparison, as will humble rather than elate, and lead the partaker to say — not, "I am worthy," — but, "I am weak; give me the strength which comes with these elements and emblems. I am thankful; suffer me to express my thankfulness by the aid of the *Eucharist*. I believe; Lord, help thou my unbelief."

He who enters a church, or uses an ordinance, with this temper and prayer, however unworthy, is in less moral danger, and more entitled to respect, than the man who stands aloof in cold prudence, committing no flagrant sins, but doing no good, and making no progress. There is a multitude of these "non-professors," who seem to look upon "profession" as a politic partisan looks upon "committal." Christians or not, they are wise men who will not be caught! Let them beware, lest they be taken in their own devices. They are unjust both to themselves and the religion. They first wrong the term "profession," by confining it to an ordinance, or the joining of a church. There is no authority for such restriction. Christ himself never used the word "profession" at all. He used the word "confess," and we wish it were substituted for the other, as nearer the meaning intended, and far less objectionable. But even then it should not be restricted to a single use. There are many ways of confessing Christ, and the obligation or danger that it involves is not easily avoided. To bear the name of Christ, is to confess. To believe in Christ, is to confess. To worship in a Christian church, to own God as our Father, and Christ our Master, is to confess. To hum-

ble one's self before God, and pray for the influences of Christian truth, and a deeper sense of obligation, is a confession and virtual promise. No man can respond sincerely to a Christian petition, and not own his obligations, as much as he who partakes of the Lord's supper. "Whoso shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein."

But here is a liability to another error, — the giving to a Christian ordinance the character of an oath, or literal "sacrament." It is not very consistent in Protestants, who disclaim the sacraments in that old and terrible sense, to raise an excuse for neglecting them on the same old interpretation. To confess Christ before men, is *not* to bind one's self by an oath; and all who refuse to do it on this plea offend the truth, and bring their sincerity in question, thereby incurring the greater guilt and increasing the danger, instead of shunning them. No minister, no church, can lawfully annex any indispensable condition to church-membership, beyond that of faith in Christ, such as Peter avowed to Jesus, and the eunuch to Philip, where both were accepted and blessed. No more than this, as a declaration of faith, do any of *our* churches require, so far as we know; no more, we are sure, have they a right to require. And they who refuse to confess as much as this, — "I believe thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," — are without excuse, and in the greater peril.

Again, it is an error, and may be a sin, to *attempt* to avoid obligation, or shun those acts which will deepen the sense of obligation. Indeed, this may be as great a sin, and expose one to as great danger, as to own obligation even hastily, or forget it when assumed. Suppose you are free to assume or decline it. Suppose it possible, as it is

not, to *create* obligation by a profession or form. What do you declare by refusing to do this? You declare you do not wish to be under obligation to God. You do not want to feel bound to obey God, and follow Christ. Is there no sin in such a confession, — no peril to the conscience and the life? In reality, it is only the *sense* of obligation that can be created, or is increased, by Christian profession. And this sense of obligation every man should desire, — should be willing and glad to create, quicken, and deepen by all the means in his power, — as at once a preservative from sin and a motive to goodness, a help to religion and salvation. It is always safe to use all such helps; never safe to neglect or defer them. It is always right to trust the means which God has given and Christ consecrated; always wrong to distrust and slight them.

But still it is said, there is danger in vowing; for so says the wise man. "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." Certainly it is better not to vow, than to vow with no purpose of performing your vows, but rather a deliberate purpose of breaking them. It is better not to pray, than to mock, or invoke a curse. Yea, it is better to deliberate, to think soberly and well, of what you say or do religiously, or in any important relation, — yea, better to wait long, than to act hastily and promise rashly. If this was the meaning of the writer just quoted, it opposes nothing we have said. If he meant — as those who borrow the excuse must suppose, to make it available — that it is better not to do right, than to do it with the possibility of doing wrong after it, he said that which is not true. But no such meaning can be ascribed to him. It would be to assert, that it is best never to form good purposes, or never avow them even in prayer, lest they should be forgotten or broken; a doctrine fatal to all

growth or goodness. There can never be guilt or danger in resolving to do right. There can be no sin in striving to become better, and laying hold of all proffered aid. He is the sinner, aggravating his sin and his danger, who, from any motive or cause whatever, refuses or delays to put himself within the reach of those truths, and the power of those influences, which are granted, and able, to bring him to repentance and obedience, cordial faith, and grateful communion. A greater than Solomon has said, — "Do this in remembrance of me." "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

We return to the man who says, "I have no professed religion," and tell him plainly, It is time you had, — a professed, and a real religion. You are in danger; and not only the common, but peculiar danger. Your denial is a confession. Your supposed exemption involves the highest obligation, without the aid of religion. Your purpose of waiting till you have "nothing else to do" is a sin, and an aggravation of sin, as containing a perversion of good and an apology for evil. Your idea of "saving your soul in time to die" is a delusion, a false and it may be fatal view of the nature of salvation, a mockery of the soul and its God, trifling with Christ and his injunctions. Repent. Obey. Keep the commandments, — yea, *all* the commandments. Be grateful for every help. Seize all the proffered means of grace. Be ashamed, and afraid, to lose a single opportunity, one responsible gift, power, or day. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of SALVATION."

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A

SUNDAY AT HOME,

OR

A LETTER TO A TRINITARIAN FRIEND.

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A SUNDAY AT HOME.

My ever dear ——:

I remember that, at the close of that long delightful talk on religious subjects which we had at your house several weeks ago, you asked me to write out some thoughts which I expressed on a certain text of Scripture, and to send them to you that you might weigh them at your leisure.

To tell you the truth, your kind request had, for a while, entirely passed from my mind. However, nothing earlier than this could have come of it in case I had not overlooked it. You know how my time has been occupied by the harrassing circumstances attending —— [Here are omitted a few sentences relating to private matters.] Even now I do not know that I should have attended to your suggestion, had it not presented itself to my mind to-day in rather a singular manner. A slight indisposition, not enough to keep me at home in pleasant weather, made my wife think it would be imprudent to attend church this inclement Sabbath; and in the retirement and silence of my chamber I happened to fall into the same reflections which filled and elevated our minds at your house. All at once I recalled your parting request; and I have now spread my paper before me to fulfil it.

It is a solemn hour, here in my still house; for my family are all at church. Perhaps it is a mere fancy of mine, but I cannot help believing that I may be made a partaker of the blessings of the sanctuary, though I am absent from its endeared services; and that God's good spirit, everywhere present, may now guide my thoughts in answer to the prayer of my minister, who, I know, is at this time imploring that we may be led into all truth. God grant that it may be so!

Of course, my dear ——, you do not expect from me the fruits of any research or learning. The thoughts that interested you, you remember, were very simple and obvious, though, as I believe, transcendently solemn and important. I dare say, a professed theologian would criticize sharply some of the remarks I shall send you. But my religious teacher often exhorts his hearers to think for themselves; and, for one, I have long been in the habit of exercising that freedom. Beside, you and I both have arrived at an age when we begin to think that plain common-sense views have a great advantage over any mere critical niceties. But I must come at once to the point, or I shall make my story too long.

The passage of Scripture which interested us so much is that in Hebrews, tenth chapter, and twentieth verse;—"*By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*" I remember how we both agreed in our admiration of that Epistle to the Hebrews; and indeed it is a grand book, and has eloquence and genius enough to build up half a dozen modern reputations. With what consummate felicity the writer presents great Christian truths under those forms which were so dear to the heart of the pious Jew! Did the Jew have a high-priest? So have we Christians, one touched with a

feeling of our infirmities, yet spotless himself. Did the Jew have a sacrifice? So have we Christians, even Him who appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Did the Jew have a mercy-seat? So have we Christians, a propitiatory not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. Did the Jew have a VEIL, within which dwelt the shining presence of God? So have we Christians, the body of Jesus Christ, within which dwells the Spirit of God; and as within the ample folds of the veil in the Temple was the "shining cloud," the emblem of God's mysterious presence, who was thus brought into visible communion with man, — as that veil thus stood between the Hebrew worshipper and God, and through it passed his prayers, and through it came forth assurances of the Divine favor, and intimations of the Divine will; — so through Christ's body we are brought into visible communion with God, through it may pass our prayers, and through it we may receive spiritual blessings, — by a new and living way which Christ hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

If I remember right, we agreed, my dear ——, in regarding these modes of illustration, so peculiar to the Epistle to the Hebrews, as figurative comparisons designed to conciliate the favorable regard of the Jews; and therefore they are not necessary in order to set forth the essential substance of our religion. Yet I know how you love this imagery, and you need not be told that I love it too, believing that what was once so pertinent to others may not be without its use to us. It may give clearness and liveliness to our apprehensions to name some of the points of resemblance between Christ's fleshly body and the veil in the Temple.

And is not this the first, most obvious, and most impor-

tant point of resemblance, that *God manifested himself within both?* He dwelt within the veil at Jerusalem, by his shining presence, hovering over the ark of the covenant, and between the cherubim. He dwelt, also, within the veil of Christ's body; for did not Christ himself say, "Believe me, the Father is in me, and dwelleth with me"? and did not the Apostle Paul speak of "God manifest in the flesh"? Why may I not use the former manifestation to give me some clearer ideas of the latter?

You know me altogether too well, my ever dear ——, to suppose that I could be guilty of making any assault upon your cherished religious convictions, or that I write with any such vulgar hope or wish of making a convert to my party. You have your established belief, and I respect you for it. I shall not soon forget the deep feeling with which you expressed your regret that some of your religious friends had accused me of believing that Christ was "only a mere man." How often have we both lamented that sectarian strife should be imbittered and disgraced with the miserable tricks of political partisanship, among which that of giving currency to an odious name or phrase has always had a prominent place. Our hearts, I am sure, have too often communed together on sacred things to permit you to doubt that the above charge is not only false and pernicious, but absolutely painful to some of the holiest feelings I cherish. Would that Unitarians had given no color to the charge themselves; but I cannot withhold the expression of my fear, that we have dwelt too much on the mere *human* side of the person of Jesus Christ; that, while we have set forth to our minds the reality of his life on earth, and have pondered the traits of his spotless example, we have not contemplated as much as we ought the other great truth, that he is an incarnation of the Spirit of God.

Pray do not think, when you see these hard theological words bristling on my paper, that I have forgotten that I am writing a letter, and not a doctrinal treatise. I see, also, that I am getting into this subject more deeply than I intended, and I am afraid I shall not get through with it before the church service is over. But as to that word *incarnation*, I must say, in passing, that I have always liked it, and am sorry it was dropped from our religious literature. I think it is slowly coming into use again, and I am glad of it. Most certainly it fitly expresses the highest and sublimest view to be taken of Jesus Christ. He is not merely a person distinct from the Father, though raised high above all other created beings. He is something more than this. He is a manifestation of the Father himself. The Father dwelt in him. Who does not remember how very often Jesus used such expressions as these: "Believe me, the Father is in me"; "The works that I do, I do not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." You remember good old Mr. ——, of whom the story was told —— [Here a few sentences are omitted.] Well, I have often heard the old gentleman say that he could never get over one objection to the Trinitarian scheme which tells us that "God the Son" dwelt in Jesus Christ, whereas Christ so often said it was the *Father* that dwelt in him. I remember he once pleasantly told me he had to jump this objection the best way he could. Good old saint that he was, he has gone where these mysteries are solved. But I allude to him merely to show that no force of system can extinguish the truth that it was the FATHER that dwelt in Christ; and of this truth the illustration named in our passage in Hebrews helps us to conceive. Within the veil of the Temple God's spirit dwelt; within the veil of Christ's flesh God's spirit dwelt. The shining presence once en-

compassed the burning bush; yet the burning bush was not God, but was a manifestation of God. His spirit once dwelt in the cherubim; yet the cherubim were not God, but were a manifestation of God. So that spirit once dwelt in the person of Jesus Christ; yet Jesus Christ was not God, but was a manifestation of God. And if God *could* dwell in those poor material things, a burning bush, an image made with man's hands, how much more truly could he dwell in a *person*, living a divine life, and breathing a heavenly spirit?

This is the glory and excellence of our religion. To forget it would be like being blind to its brightest splendor, its most quickening power. It is not merely an abstract spiritual essence which the human soul craves for its God. It demands something more. All religions have supplied something more. They have had their accepted manifestations of God, by oracles, signs, and shining presence. The heart still asks with the disciple Philip, "*Show* us the Father." The peculiar glory and power of our religion is found in the reply of Jesus, "He that hath seen *me*, hath seen the Father," the Father dwelling in me, manifesting himself through me, showing forth his benignity in my works of love, his tenderness and pity in my compassion for human ignorance and suffering, his wish to reclaim and forgive in my labors to seek and to save the lost, — thus bringing himself into close and quickening communion with his children by adopting, as the method of his manifestation to them, a loving, devoted, and blessing life.

Thus, as there was a manifestation of God to the Jew, within the veil of the Temple, so with how much more brightness, benignity, and power is there a manifestation of the Father to us within the veil of Christ's flesh! By a *new* way, it is called in this text; and well is it called

"new," because it is so different from all the methods of manifestation which were used in the elder dispensation. By a new and *living* way, it is added; and well is it called a living way, for it is not dead material things like Urim and Thummim, and cherubim, and the burning bush, but it is life itself, the life of the Son of God, that is now the manifestation by which we see the Father.

And now, my dear ——, why shall we not look upon that veil of the flesh with as much awe and wonder, at least, as the pious Hebrew felt when he looked upon the veil of the Temple? How did the mighty Ruler of the Universe manifest himself within the folds of that veil which hung before the holy of holies? How could it be done? No doubt many a worshipping Jew pondered often and deeply that question. Perhaps the queries we vex ourselves with are not quite so new as we sometimes suppose, and there may have been Pantheists, Transcendentalists, and Humanitarians, even before the year of grace. I have no doubt there were, as, with all my respect for these gentlemen, I yet have no idea that they mark distinctively an era of *grace*. So, also, we may ask, How did the mighty Ruler of the Universe manifest himself in the person of Jesus Christ? Did God dwell in Christ as a *separate* consciousness and will? If so, was there a human soul in Christ, and a divine soul also? If there was but one conscious person in Jesus Christ, were his own will and affections so *overpowered* by the spirit of God, that he himself was nothing, the infinite taking possession of, and swallowing up, the finite? Or did the divine agency mingle harmoniously with Christ's own thoughts, feelings, and motives, just as here on earth a great mind will quicken another mind, which, though it acts through its own powers, will act all the freer, higher, and nobler by this communion with a

superior intelligence? These are high and mysterious questions. I perhaps have my choice of them, and prefer the solution suggested by one to that implied in the other. BUT IT IS MERELY OPINION. I can *know* nothing on this point. It is out of the sphere of our intelligence. "No one can know who the Son is, but the Father." It is not material that I should know. Enough for me to know the simple fact, that God was acting in the person of Jesus Christ. In accepting Christ's words, I am accepting God's words; in trusting in Christ's promises, I am trusting in God's promises; in coming to Jesus Christ, I am coming to God himself; it is the glory of God that I see in the face of Jesus Christ, and I may approach the Father by a new and living way which the Son has consecrated through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. There is a mystery about that veil of the flesh which I cannot solve. I am willing it should *remain* a mystery. Perhaps its power over me may be all the greater for its being a mystery. Only I would look up with awe and wonder to Him in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead, believing that no other being ever stood in a relation so close to God, or so momentous to man.

I do not know, my dear ——, that you will have patience to read this long letter. I see that my minister has closed *his* sermon before I have finished mine; for from my window I descry some of the congregation in the street. And yet, before my family reach our house, I may have time to express one concluding thought, which I believe I did not suggest in our interview several weeks ago. "A new and living way which he hath *consecrated*." What was the way which he consecrated? A mortal life. Yes, Jesus made a mortal life to be the fittest, the grandest, the noblest manifestation of God himself. He hath consecrated *humanity*. He hath made the lights of Divinity to stream through it.

He hath made a mortal life, — just such a life as we lead or may lead, a dutiful, though tempted, tried, and suffering life, — he hath made that *divine*, — a veil through which, in him, we may see God; a veil through which, in us, others may see him too. God shining out through our life in the flesh! Have we so consecrated that life? Alas that our selfishness, our worldliness, our lust, our pride, do so often appear instead! But if there be any reality in our Christian faith, if for us God and Christ, heaven and immortality, are facts, and not dreams, let the lights of a divine love, wisdom, goodness, piety, stream out through the veil of our flesh, that God may indeed dwell in us, and others be drawn by us to the holy of holies of his presence. That such, though under different phases of faith, may be our perfect consummation and felicity, is the sincere wish of

Your old and faithful friend,

——— ———.

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EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

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EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

We often hear much of Experimental Religion. The phrase is frequently used in a narrow sense; but its true meaning is vital to all just conceptions of the religious life. Religion must be experimental to be true, to be any thing to the heart of man. Jesus says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Those words contain a glorious and a startling principle. The soul can know nothing of any great spiritual truth, — nothing of the life of genius, or of the divine life of the Son of God, — nothing of the spiritual world or of the life of heaven, — until it is born into these grand realities. We must open our eyes upon these things, and live in the midst of their grandeur and their beauty, to *see* their meaning and their glory, as we must open our eyes upon nature to see its thousand forms of life. A living experience is the only possible teacher of the human soul. Traditionary teaching is nothing. Revelation itself is to the soul like the beauty of the world to senseless stones, until a spiritual life opens its meaning and reveals its mysteries. In the Apocalypse it is said, that no man in heaven or in earth was able to open the mysterious book, and unloose the seals, except the Lamb who had been slain. The mysterious book of God's

truth and love is never opened to any human heart until the life of the Lamb that was slain is present there, with the knowledge which such a divine experience must bring.

In the first place, it is interesting to see how entirely the ministry of Jesus corresponds to this principle. Every thing which Jesus says in his conversations with the multitudes, in his loftiest teachings and in his rebukes, is based upon the actual life of men. He speaks to actual human experience. He is to be understood through this experience. He does not first give abstract statements of everlasting principles, and then apply them to special sins. He begins with the sin; and, through the convictions of the conscience, leads the soul up to the everlasting truth, and causes the great law to become an irresistible inference from the actual experience which shall pierce through the heart like a sword. When he teaches the law of disinterestedness, — to "do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again," — he draws it forth in reproving contrast with the actual selfishness which he beholds. When he unfolds the love of God to man, his child, or the duty which man owes to the Infinite Parent, he begins every thing with, or illustrates every thing by, the actual workings of the human heart. His revelation of God is the repetition of the word *Father;* a word which directly speaks to man's deepest affections; which the first movements of life begin to illustrate, and which every thrill of parental love — the rapture, or the anguish, of a father's or a mother's heart — develops with new clearness and power. His revelation of man's duty to man is the repetition of the word *brother;* a word which bids humanity to extend the affections which nature inspires at the hearth, over the wide world, to every child of the race. See how he writes his doctrine upon the universal sympathies of human nature. When we revive the actual life

of his own time, its prejudices, its feelings and modes of thought, all apparently abstract declarations assume the same character. Jesus knew what was in man, and how the truth could be revealed to his heart. And it is as if he said, No moral teaching can be made clear to the soul, unless it is linked with some positive experience. He did say that when he said that the life is the light of men. He said it more affectingly in those negative declarations of the principle, in which he affirms, that some, through the spirit of pride and the blindness of sin, could not receive his words, and mourns over their darkness, and leaves them to their hopeless unbelief.

These thoughts reveal the cause of failure in many attempts to impart spiritual instruction. Could men begin with the actual life of human nature, its pride, its passions, its love, its grief, and distinctly unfold the truth which each experience involves, and thus lead the soul onward, step by step, as the mind is led forward in true intellectual training, they would reveal the Gospel to the world, and impress it upon the soul, in something of the power of its first preaching in Palestine. The world often turns away, untaught, uninterested, from many expositions of the principles of Jesus. But deal directly with the pressing experience of the human heart, with the questions that perplex it and the passions that agitate it, and no *man* can be uninterested. The pulpit moves, if it does not charm, when it touches the living experience. Do men sit before it cold and passionless, when it opens the secret of their griefs, or the shameful secrets of their sin? Then it sways them by the might of the Spirit of God. Then they bend penitently before it, or flee away in wrath from the truth which they will not receive, and cannot bear.

We return to the direct consideration of our general prin-

ciple. The soul knows nothing of any great spiritual truth, except by the opening of light in its living experience. The principle is illustrated in all mental action. The reception and the history of every man of genius present a witness to its truth. Who are they that gather in admiration around each gifted child of the race, except those whose feeling and thought respond to his burning words? When such a spirit speaks, those who have a kindred nature come; but there is no charm in his words for the uncongenial heart. But we leave all other illustrations, and enter the realm of religious truth. And we take the first thought which can be suggested there. How can man know that there is a reality in spiritual truths, and that the soul possesses a power to live in their eternal and ever-growing light? No declarations from another's lips, no outward teachings, can bring this knowledge, in the true sense of the word. Has a true spiritual life wakened in his heart, and gained pure moral victories in his history? Has he once placed this world's great temptations beneath his feet, in the feeling that simple integrity of heart is infinitely better than kingdoms and their glory? Has he looked up in his hour of agony, and felt that there are resources of thought and prayer in which the heart can still live; resources as unfading as the stars over the Redeemer when he was prostrate in the garden, — as bright and blessed as the angels that came to strengthen him? Men who could renounce the world, and give their bodies to the flame or to the cross, found these spiritual truths an infinite reality. These things were substance, and every thing beside was shadow. In the experiences which have been instanced, and in all similar triumphs of the spirit over the flesh, they will become real to every heart. We have little of this profound experience; and therefore spiritual truth and the spiritual world

are vague and shadowy, notwithstanding the glorious testimony of martyrs and prophets and apostles, notwithstanding the teaching and the life of the Son of God. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Our chief spiritual danger is here disclosed. We take great religious truths before they have become realities in our experience, and repeat them so confidently, that we sometimes forget the necessity of that profound experience. Men may thus echo the divinest truths with their lips, when they are never born into the kingdom. How superficially inexperience often repeats sublime Christian doctrines! You say that life is a divine gift which is to be always viewed with unutterable joy. You say that God is good; and that no shadow of a shade rests upon his love in a single providence towards one of his children. The *statement* is TRUE and GRAND. Childhood will repeat it before the burden of duty or grief has been borne. The world is Eden to the child. Thus does life, and thus does God, appear to the angels above. Such is the appearance also to men who have an angel's heart. But has your faith borne the test of laborious, tempted, sometimes saddened life? Can you repeat it amidst sharp trials of body or of mind? amidst the desolations of your home? Nay, have you found its verifications there? Has an energy been called forth by the pressure of duty, by conflict and by trial, which was a new revelation of the power of the soul? Have new perceptions of the Father's goodness dawned upon the heart, when it was veiled in the cloud of the darkest providence? If you can stand amidst the experience in which self must be crucified and the cross must be borne, — if you can take up the work which was given you to do, in a Christian exposition of your great responsibility, without a transient rebellion of heart or will, — if you can

pass through all which you may be called to meet and bear in the feeling that God is good, and life is beautiful, at every step, with the eternal sunshine for ever poured around you, — man may reverence you with an admiration only less than worship. That life must bring knowledge, at once profound and divine. It may say little more in words than was said by childish inexperience. But it repeats the faith of childhood from an angel's point of view. The theory of inexperience has been gloriously verified by the experience of life. It is good to hear grand declarations concerning God's ways, and truth, even from the lips of inexperience. But come from temptations conquered, from a bloody sweat borne in the Saviour's patience, with the same bright words of faith, — come, breathing the prayer of peace beneath the burden of the cross, — and man will receive it as the testimony of one who knows and has seen the glory of which he speaks.

A profound experience brings true spiritual knowledge. And therefore life is so difficult, beneath the Father's providence. And we do not merely refer to special trials which seem to spread a gloom over the world, and over nature itself, when we speak of life's difficulty. We refer to ordinary, universal duty. When anger is stirred, or patience tried, or pride tempted, or selfishness excited in some of its legion forms, is it not difficult to live, and only cherish the pure and Christ-like spirit? Is it not difficult never to be made a sinner by another's provocations, never to be rendered unforgiving by another's passion, to make the evils of life and the sins of man perpetually build up our love? No living man has gone on one single day, without some faltering in his way. Confessions come up from the holiest lives and the purest hearts. You may say, Life is glorious; sent to bring heaven into every breathing

heart. Grant the whole. More is true than man can say. Yet life is difficult still. You may say, All these crosses and self-denials are divine steps to peace. That is true. Yet they are crosses nevertheless; and it is difficult to meet them in that perfect resignation which shall cause them to bring that peace to us. He must have had little earnest thought respecting his spiritual condition, who has never once been tempted to wish that he had not been exposed to the trial of a life which it is so difficult to bear. But here is the divine reason of the difficulty. If experience is the way to profound spiritual knowledge, that experience must come in various forms, and in all its depth. Each capacity of love, or of endurance, must be tried. Each string in the soul must be attuned by some heavenly ministry. Thus alone can it attain a nobly developed life; or become as a harp whose melody shall be in harmony with the pure life of the heavenly world.

Here, indeed, is the only solution which we are to ask of much that seems mysterious, when we think of the trial of experience to ourselves or others. We look upon the child whose life is like the freshness of the morning; who knows only quickly vanishing sorrows, but no undying worm; and ask, Must such a life enter this sharp conflict of duty and temptation, perhaps of agony and sin? Must it be exposed to the peril of becoming like many who were once pure as itself, a shameless transgressor of the laws of man, or God? Can it not be kept beneath the sheltering wings of love for ever? Cannot love do and suffer in its stead? How *man* might destroy those whom he would almost die to *save!* Let them go where feeling shall be called forth in its deepest strength; where bitter tears may gush from eyes that are always laughing now. This conflict with difficulties may strike out sparks of holy

fire. Only take care that, if the young should hereafter fall, they may not trace that ruin to any sin of yours,—as you hope to be saved from agonizing and damning self-reproach. And let them go into the grand and perilous school of human experience, to learn life's lessons there. Do not expect to save them from the pains in which man must have his birth.

Man must be born into the truth before he can know its beauty or its power. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is not easy to be a Christian, in the divine sense of that word. Who is born into this kingdom of light and glory, through the divine power of his life? We are all Christian by tradition. But how many of the teachings of Jesus have we verified in ourselves, by our living experience? Which of the beatitudes have we fathomed? Can we say out of our own souls, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled"? Can we say in our experience, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"? Have we gained that freedom from selfish desire which seems to make the whole world our own, and enables us to enjoy all its beauty, whether it is held by ourselves or is another's property? Can we say with the witness in ourselves, "He that liveth shall never die"? Do the sweet fields beyond the swelling flood stand clothed in living green before the believing heart? Select any grand truth which Jesus declared, and what do we really know? Do we *know* that a boundless forgiveness of spirit is sweeter, nobler, than this quick resistance which the world worships? Do we even admit that in our theory? What, then, do we know of the all-forgiving Cross, of the Lamb that was slain, whose spirit can alone open the mysterious book of life, and unloose the seals? It is not an easy thing to become

a Christian indeed. It is the universal law, that no great acquisition can be gained without a mighty effort. It is not strange that Jesus said to those who would enter into fellowship with himself, "Ye must drink of my cup, and be baptized with my baptism." He does not save us from this process of profound experience. He makes goodness lovely to our eyes and our hearts. He says, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome." The path is easier since he has trodden it. We hear his voice calling us as we follow, and we hasten onward as the child hastens when he hears the voice of parental love. But every step of that journey our feet must measure too.

Reader, religion must thus be experimental, or it is nothing to you. This is the teaching of philosophy, and of the Scripture. What do you really *know?* Trust not to bright theories concerning Jesus, his life and his resurrection. Let the Christ live within you, in his holiness and his reconciliation. That experimental faith shall cause him to be a present rest, and the hope of glory.

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METHOD

OF

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By GEORGE W. BRIGGS.

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METHOD OF CHRISTIAN SALVATION.

"So far as Christian Salvation is a change effected in individuals, and may be known to them, and be by them described to others, does the saving power of Christ eminently attend upon a knowledge of his life, as it is revealed in his manifestation, from his birth to his Ascension; and is it reasonable to expect that the redeeming effect of this saving power will be proportioned to the faithfulness with which his life is studied, and the perfectness with which it becomes known and is contemplated?"

THE terms of this question prescribe the limits of the present discussion. It proposes, not a speculative, but a practical inquiry. It waives an examination of the abstruse philosophy of Christian Salvation, which endeavors to explain the mysteries of the Divine Nature and Government, and asks, What is the "saving power" as recognized in the human consciousness? It turns from all theories of the mysterious nature of the person of Jesus, to ask, What has he actually been, and what is he designed to be, to human hearts? What relation does his life bear to the religion which speaks in his name, and to the true spiritual development of the world? The subject touches a chord that must vibrate in all believing hearts. Speculative discussions concerning the mysteries of Christ's nature sever the

Church into discordant fragments. The question what he is to lowly disciples awakens the same answer in unnumbered hearts, and causes the same confession to tremble upon unnumbered lips.

The first thing which suggests itself as we approach the subject is, the fact that a sentiment of profound personal reverence for Jesus has been one of the most characteristic features in the life of the Church. Jesus has been a "real presence" in its midst. His disciples have seldem rested in an abstract consideration of his words. The sense of personal attachment and dependence in the hearts of the first Apostles, as they stood around him in Palestine, was scarcely more profound than the same sentiment has been in fervent minds of every age. Christendom has sought to make Jesus live again to the imagination, until every bond of union with him should become an electric chain to transmit the fires of life and love throughout the heart. The Catholic bowed before the visible representations of the Redeemer's Life and Passion; and the Puritan, who rejected these outward symbols, sought, by profound contemplation, to live in the spiritual presence of Jesus. The same tendency meets us everywhere. The Cross has floated upon the banner of each crusade against the sinning world. Jesus himself has been lifted up to subdue the heart into penitence, and to soothe its penitence into peace. The same sentiment has appeared in Christian art. Genius has found its highest inspiration, and won its noblest triumph, in representing upon the canvas the scenes of the Redeemer's ministry. Though the glory of its conception could never be realized, it was moved by a ceaseless impulse to attempt the transcendent subject. This sentiment has touched the poet's nature, and has spoken in the hymns of faith. In reality, or in imagination, Christendom has been

upon one perpetual pilgrimage to Palestine, and stood looking up to Calvary with clasped hands and adoring hearts. There the devout monk looked while in his lonely cell. There the heart of the Puritan rested in his voyage across the sea. There the martyr turned, in the midst of his suffering, to realize the presence of his Lord; and the lights of that presence made "his face as it had been the face of an angel," while the fire kindled upon his frame. The Church has echoed the strain which the Revelation represents the company of the redeemed as chanting, and, with its myriad voices, raised the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and glory, and blessing."

What is the meaning of this tendency? Is it a baseless sentiment, or has it a firm and philosophical support? Is it the excitement of impassioned feeling, or is it a natural and perennial flower from the living root of faith?

The Life of Jesus is the central and vital fact in Christianity. The characteristic sentiment of the Church may be justified by various considerations; by the peculiar relation which exists between Christ's life and his teaching; by the transcendent power of a living manifestation of truth to redeem the world; by the moral revolution which such a manifestation began at once to produce; by the consciousness of true disciples; by the words of Jesus himself. We shall glance at each of these considerations in the order in which they have been named.

First, we justify the sentiment to which we have referred, by the relation between the Life of Jesus and his Teaching. That relation is altogether peculiar. In its most distinctive element, nothing resembles it in the history of man. Jesus wrote nothing during his ministry. He revealed the truth through a divine life. He sought to communicate it in no

other way. And therefore he must himself be lifted up in every age, that successive generations may behold the divine record of the Revelation which he came to impart.

We do not forget the instructions in his precepts and discourses, which were afterwards recorded by his disciples. But how were those instructions given? They present no features of an elaborated system. If we compare the teachings of Jesus with the treatises in which other minds have attempted to unfold theological or moral truth, the difference between them instantly appears. Christ spoke in miscellaneous conversations. He went about amidst the varied scenes of human life. He was a guest at the marriage feast. He entered the bereaved home. He met the whole and the diseased, the lowly and the proud, the penitent and the still sinning heart, to do and to say what each incident and manifestation of character suggested to his perfect love. His conversations are a part of his life; and the record of those conversations is the sketching of one feature of that life as it revealed itself to those who looked upon it first, and an attempt to transmit its image and expression to the disciples of every time.

It is the distinctive peculiarity of Christianity, that it is a religion which is not taught in words. Its doctrines, its precepts, its spirit, its results, all appear in Christ's personal manifestations from his Baptism to his Ascension. We do not simply mean that he was a bright example of his own instructions. There was indeed a divine consistency between his words and acts. The robe which he wore at his Crucifixion was a symbol of his moral life. There was no seam upon his garment. In this respect Jesus as greatly transcends other instructors of the race, as Christianity transcends other systems of faith. But the life of Jesus is more than an example of the truth. It is itself the truth. We

cannot fully understand the spiritual principles in his conversations without referring to the circumstances which led to their expression. We cannot separate one of these gems from its fitting place in his personal history without dimming its lustre. The character of other teachers may do little to elucidate their doctrine. Their words have a deeper meaning than their life. Their Ideal immeasurably transcends the Actual. In the life of Jesus the Actual is the Ideal; — unattained, uncomprehended, through twenty centuries of reverent discipleship. The meekness of Christianity is not taught by Christ's words of gentleness alone, but by that silent patience which was smitten and reviled. The doctrine of submission is revealed in the agony of Gethsemane. Love appears in the sacrifice of Calvary. As Jesus himself rises more clearly before the mind, in his Temptation or his Compassion, in his Submission or in his Sacrifice, his words shine with a brighter light. No abstract examination will disclose their treasures of thought and truth. We go back to him to fill out the meaning of every declaration from his lips; and when, by a kindred life, man can really apprehend that yet unfathomed soul, the revelation shall be opened in its depth and height. Men have sometimes separated Christ's instructions from himself, and asked, "What truth did he reveal which is not somewhere intimated in the words of others?" We do not stop to insist that we read the words of others under the influence of Christianity, and often seem to find a teaching in them now, that far surpasses the idea which they were intended to convey. We reply, that to forget Christ himself is to blot out the profoundest meaning of his teaching, and destroy the brightest feature of his revelation. Withdraw the sunlight of the life of Jesus from his words, and he may not appear to be essentially distinct

from some of the brighter stars in the firmament of human thought.

Christianity abounds with illustrations to show how Jesus himself becomes the Revelation of the Truth. We select the idea of God, and of the relation that exists between the Infinite Father and the human soul. The life of Jesus is a new and peculiar revelation of God. It is in harmony with every other expression of the Infinite Nature, but it is a manifestation which no other medium could so well impart. No forms of matter, however grand, can so fully or so distinctly express the mind and heart of God, as one speaking, living, spotless soul. Some men, as they look at the grandeur of this boundless universe, deem it unphilosophical to suppose that the brief life of Jesus, in an obscure corner of the world, is to be considered as a peculiar expression of the Infinite God. But true greatness lies in character, not in vastness. A pure act of a lowly man may have a beauty which the Universe does not express. In one act of Jesus towards a penitent, in his sacrifice at Calvary, we see an expression of the character of God, which is more distinct than the glory of earth and heaven. We imply no contradiction between Christ and Nature, or any other revelation of the Invisible Father. Nature speaks of God. But we look upon Nature with different eyes, under the influence of the idea of the Father which Christianity unfolds. Her immutable laws have now an expression of love. Her occasional convulsions are robed in light. The Sun of a higher truth has risen upon this vast Universe, — these mighty and silent spheres, — this incomprehensible Providence, — to illuminate the whole, as morning cheers the earth. Jesus has touched the eye and given it sight. In man's own nature, also, there are inborn ideas of God. But those conceptions are brought forth in strength

and clearness, under the inspiration of the character of Christ. There is a perfect harmony between all these modes of revelation. Yet the comparison which Jesus himself suggests still presents itself to the mind. He is like the Sun, to bring a new light, and render visible what was dark before in Nature and in the soul. The moral manifestation in the spirit that bent over the suffering, and smiled upon the penitent, and died for the race, is most complete. The words of Jesus, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," are glorious truth.

We take another illustration, which may be more briefly stated. There is the idea of humanity, — of what the soul is designed to be, and may become, in its true development; of the love and grace which it shall wear as a garment when it rises from the grave of sin; of that immortality which will then be its inheritance, — the result of present purity, — the divine flower from the seed of truth and life planted now in self-denial and in steadfast faith. The ideal of human nature was first disclosed in the life of Jesus; and so transcendent was the teaching, so far did it surpass man's utmost dream of purity, that he has bowed before the true manifestation of himself, and called it God. Jesus revealed and glorified humanity, at the same time that he became a new manifestation of the Father. In that divine humanity, that humanized divinity, the idea of God and of the human soul are both disclosed, with the unmeasured range of truths which those revelations involve and contain.

We forbear from more extended illustrations. The tendency of Christendom to fasten its eyes upon Jesus is not a mere sentiment. It is a conscious or an implied acknowledgment of the great feature of the Christian system, to which we have referred. Men have looked beyond the rev-

elation in the words, to the higher revelation in the action of a godlike soul. We have spoken of the relation between Jesus and his teaching. The term relation does not adequately express the fact. A relation implies a connection between two different things. Here there is identity. The expression, "I am the Truth," has a literal signification. And it must be for ever true, that in exact proportion as the life of Jesus shall be comprehended, his doctrine will reveal its matchless beauty to the world.

We pass to the second general consideration. The tendency of Christendom to look to Jesus himself is justified by the divine power of a living manifestation of truth to redeem the world. The genius of Christianity everywhere refuses abstract statements of religious truth. It meets the wants of the intellect. But it speaks at the same time to other and deeper powers. It makes a direct appeal to the soul by glorious parables and the history of a godlike life. It presents instructions in forms which fill the mind and heart and conscience, and constrain the entire nature to adoration. It recognizes the law of spiritual growth which is revealed in the development of the mind of every child. The idea of the parent — the highest earthly relation — and the conception of filial duty do not come by appeals to the intellect. They come with the ministry of that love which folds us in its arms, and bears us on its bosom. So it is with the idea of the invisible Father, and of man's supreme relation to him. Christianity presents the manifestation of His love directly to the soul, and thus develops the idea of God and that filial reverence for him which may make the life of the spiritual a perpetual hymn. Therefore Jesus spoke to uneducated men, and, by direct appeals to their moral nature, revealed to their consciousness the highest truths. As his parables lived in their imagination, or as

they gazed upon himself, life filled their souls. And when the new spirit grew into strength, and they reflected upon its nature, and distinguished the ideas to which it gave birth, men drew out those grand conclusions which became the inspiration and the food of their highest thought.

It is at once the distinction and the glory of Christianity that it refuses abstract statements. We know not how to give adequate expression to the fact, but we know that moral light and life are most surely imparted to the soul by immediate contact with living purity. The holiness of a parent, brooding over the child, immeasurably more than words, regenerates his being. The moral nature grows when we come into a pure spiritual presence. We feel the sentiment of love beginning to burn, — we know not and ask not how, — as we gaze, and admire, and worship. We breathe a holier air. By a sure, though unconscious influence, the blood receives a new vitality, and pours health through head and heart, and limb and member. When the spirit of God can thus be brought into contact with the spirit of man, his whole nature will feel the redeeming presence. We need these living manifestations. And therefore the Word became flesh, to speak to our human nature, and to flood the lowly heart with heavenly inpulses and divinest truth. Man is not left to an abstraction. He is not left to elaborate the truth of God's love from the often conflicting appearances of nature. He beholds the Cross; and while he looks, mind and heart and will are taken captive in one sentiment of devotion. The direct presence of a divine spirit infused new thoughts and new life into the souls of the first Apostles, when their theories of the expected Messiah were altogether false. When every other ministry must have failed, that direct appeal to the moral nature triumphed over every opposition of feeling, every

prejudice of the mind, every resistance of the will. It regenerated thought by the growth of the new germ of life, and imbued humanity with the spirit of the children of God.

There is a method of regarding religious truths which is too exclusively intellectual. It separates those truths from their manifestations. It attempts to reason out the doctrines of faith, the laws of morality which Jesus declared, with no direct reference to himself. It places law above persons. It reveres intellect with a supreme homage, and empties its creed of those divine persuasions of the heart which logic may not perfectly demonstrate. It asks, "What truths did Jesus declare which must remain the same, though his life could be erased from the history of the world, because they express the eternal laws of Nature and of the Soul?"

The words of Jesus do express the everlasting laws of Nature and of Life. That view of his teaching is not to be forgotten. It must be remembered to satisfy one element in every thinking mind. When presented in its power, it drives back the soul which assails the authority of religious truths, overwhelmed by irresistible convictions. "He that rejecteth me," said Jesus, "and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Upon this foundation the doctrine of an eternal judgment-seat may be securely built, and the waves of a sea of doubt shall roll against it in vain. Yet this impersonal view alone is not the fitting view for man. It shuts out great spheres of our being from due consideration, and inevitably leads to distorted conclusions. The gravest errors in religious theories have resulted from the attempt to gain a purely intellectual faith. The intellect looks up to God to reason

upon his incomprehensible nature, and it obtains the idea of sovereign, impersonal, unchanging Law, — a majestic, yet a cold and dread thought, — awakening awe more than love. But when the affections of the heart are included in the argument, as intimations of the nature of Him who inspired them all, man beholds a personal Father. Then, upon the wing of prayer, whose flight no speculation can chain or bound, the soul ascends to the God of the Christian teaching, bending over every lowly and loving child in his tender compassion and omnipresent mercy. Man is a creature of feeling as well as of intellect. He must embrace the truth which his heart craves, that he may escape from distorted conclusions, and receive the impulses which have greatest redeeming power. We cannot nullify this law of being. The abstract names of virtue have no such power as the words Gethsemane and Olivet and Calvary. We cling to concrete forms. We want something that speaks to sense and sentiment as well as thought. Therefore we remember the names of martyrs. We exalt the actual models of excellence into the company of saints. If we separate the principles in the teaching of Jesus from himself, we overlook the central power in Christianity, and transgress against the law of human nature. We take away the Lord and leave only the words Truth, Purity, Love, instead of that suffering, redeeming, godlike life, which the heart may adore and love with thrills of joy. Arguments addressed to its understanding could not meet the great want of humanity. The Law could not accomplish its deliverance. It needed the manifestation of the Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh," yet pure as the holiness of God. It needed an expression of truth to which it could surrender its heart in a total allegiance; an expression which could melt its obduracy, and electrify and con-

trol its will. Let man listen to the living voice. Let him follow in the steps of the living Jesus. Let him gaze upon his pierced hands and bleeding side, and he will know the fulness of his saving power.

Two or three additional considerations remain, which may be briefly noticed. History sustains the position which we have attempted to establish. It is an historic fact, that just when the life of Jesus appeared, a change, which seems almost as miraculous as his life, began to manifest itself in the character of men. Whatever theory of the nature of Jesus we may embrace, this fact still remains. It is the central truth in the history of the world. If we trace back to its source the flood of redeeming influences, in which multitudes washed away their sins, which rose and gathered strength to sweep away the idolatries that were upheld by the sanction of ages and the might of empires, we come to that divine life in Palestine. There was the birth of a new power, which is slowly and majestically moving on to accomplish its own prophecy of Universal Empire. And what was the teaching of that age of moral wonders? Mainly, a repetition of the story of the Redeemer's life. "Christ and him crucified," was the constant theme. The world had not then begun to think of separating Christ's teachings from himself. Men repeated the story of the Miracle and the Cross; of that ministering Love, and the deserted Tomb. They studied truth in its living expressions. They gazed upon the countenance of Jesus until they were transfigured too. The publican and the sinner became the saint and the martyr, and the grand moral revolution began, at whose coming earth and heaven rejoiced together.

The vital element of this great change cannot be mistaken or overlooked. Spiritual truths had been taught be-

fore, in words of wisdom and of eloquence. Pure minds had labored to promote the moral welfare of the race. Yet these efforts were like pebbles against the tide. "Notwithstanding its greater measure of truth," as it has been justly said, "Christianity would have failed, like the philosophies of ancient times, had it been presented as a system of abstract thought. But the "Word became flesh," and dwelt in the midst of men. The Spirit of God, in this new expression of its character and love, this new creation, moved over the face of the deep. It came into the chaos of human experience and human passions, to dispel the darkness, and create the order and the life of heaven. The life of God came into immediate contact with the life of men, and humanity began to be divine.

Again. The consciousness of lowly disciples corresponds with the conclusions of argument and the teaching of history. What is that strong personal affection for Jesus, to which we referred in the beginning of our discussion, but an expression of the general consciousness of the Christian World? This tendency of Christendom explains itself, and is its own justification. Disciples have clung to Jesus, and bathed his feet with their tears, because they found in him deliverance, and light, and power. There the truth was luminous to every faculty of their nature. There the spirit of divinity seemed to bend to the depths in which humanity was lying, to stretch forth its hand to save. There was a life which spanned and filled the vast gulf between man and God; which touched human nature on one side of its being, and on the other was one with the Infinite Father, — a life which could bring God and man into blessed unity. The world has seldom stopped to give a philosophical account of this tendency to look to Jesus; but faithful disciples have found the mind illuminated and the heart

alive; they have found that they could "do all things" in the power of his presence, and that was enough. When he laid his hands upon humanity, it felt that it received the Holy Ghost. Man knows not whence the Spirit cometh, or whither it goeth. He cannot track its mysterious way. But he knows, by his experience, that it proceedeth from the Son, and he celebrates that redeeming influence in words and tears of joy. "The sheep have known the voice of the Good Shepherd," and have followed him into the fold of peace.

Once more. The reasons for exalting the life of Jesus culminate in the disciple's mind, in the consideration that his direct teaching calls upon men to look to himself. It is unnecessary to adduce quotations in proof of this assertion. We remember the declaration, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." We remember the manifold expressions which reiterate the same idea in various forms. We remember that the truths which the disciples could not bear while Jesus was present with them were to be revealed to their clearer apprehension of his character after he had gone away. The gift of "the Comforter, to lead them into all truth," was this gradual opening of his character to their souls, — this spiritual coming to their consciousness. The teaching of Jesus is uniform and clear. He recognized no process by which the truth could be known, either during his actual presence or after his Ascension, except by the growth of this divine life in obedient hearts. Without that life the wisdom of the wise would be foolishness. With it babes were exalted to know what prophets and kings desired in vain to see. As Jesus should become a real presence in human feeling, and make his abode in the temple of the human soul, the vision of God and of his truth, of the spiritual world and immortality,

would be revealed, to fill the heart with light and love and peace. From every part of his ministry the word seems to come which once was heard from his lips: "Come unto me, all ye weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Christendom has obeyed the call of Jesus, as well as the impulse of its own heart, in raising its unbroken and ever-swelling chant of thanksgiving to the Redeemer's name.

A brief development of two general thoughts, which grow out of what has been already said, will close the present discussion. We see, first, the great aim which man is to strive to realize in the administration of Christian Truth. It has been frequently said, "That the great question is, not what Jesus *was*, but what he *taught*." If the question "what he was" refers to his mysterious nature, we do not urge its consideration. But it has been applied to his personal history, as well as to speculations concerning his nature. The utmost glory of human thought is spiritually to know what Jesus was. What can be a higher aim on earth or in heaven than to seek to know what the highest expression of spiritual life, and the clearest expression of God, really is. "If I be lifted up," said Jesus, "I will draw all men unto me." To lift up that perfect picture of man and God, with its true expression! No superficial study of the life of Jesus will accomplish this. When the painter desires to portray a noble face, he studies each lineament of the countenance; he watches and strives to catch each minute, yet characteristic expression, that the man may live upon the canvas. The student of the life of Jesus is to look upon each event in his history, to gather up each expression of his spirit, that the image may be complete, and the world behold the living Redeemer. Each careful examination of the details of his life will lead to clearer per-

ceptions of his spirit. Whoever has closely studied minute incidents in his ministry must have often been surprised to see new views of the highest principles breaking forth from most familiar passages. It is as if a vein of richest ore were suddenly discovered in paths which we had daily trod, with no suspicion that we were walking over such princely treasures.

What scrutiny of this divine life can be too minute? Humanity gathers the fragments of the history of its noblest names to gain a new or a deeper impression of their characters; for it feels that there is the food for its highest nature. There is healing and life in the hem of the Redeemer's garment. Jesus is the living Gospel, — the realized Ideal of humanity. His action expresses or implies all spiritual truth, all divine morality. Let each scene live again! Let no element which helped to form it be forgotten! Let the imagination picture the publican and the sinner, the penitent woman, the sincere inquirer, the cavilling people, as they stood in the presence of Jesus! Let it behold him when he was pressed by tempting questions, when he conversed with the beloved disciples, when he bore the insults of the multitude, — and watch the exact expression of his countenance, and feel the spirit which breathed in all his words. In precise proportion to the degree of exactness with which man can thus read the whole, he will discern the nature and the details of a divine morality, and find it moving before him, like a pillar of cloud and fire, to guide his pilgrim way.

To know what Jesus was! It is an attainment that implies a wide culture, as well as an exact acquaintance with Christ's personal history. There is an intimate relation between Christian truth and human knowledge. To know clearly what Jesus was, man must explore many spheres

of thought. Directly, or indirectly, the highest intellectual acquisition may aid his conception. He is not only to study the details of Jewish customs and the spirit of Jewish law; not only to learn the geography of Palestine, the criticism of the sacred books, and the character of the Jewish mind. The knowledge of the entire life of the ancient world, of the great opposing influences to the first spread of the Christian faith, and of the mighty conflicts of opinion in that age of wonderful progress, will assist his thought. Each controversy which Christianity has excited in the world tends to reveal its character. The philosophers and teachers of the race must be reproduced, and measured in the presence of the Son of God, that the mind may realize their greatness, and behold his divinity. Science also offers its contributions to enrich the conceptions of faith. It illustrates them by analogies, when it does not enlarge them by its attainments. Nature, Human Wisdom, History, the World's Life, bring their tribute to the Redeemer's feet. Yet while the Christian student gratefully gathers up this royal tribute, he remembers that its best purpose is to illustrate the highest spiritual truths. The divinest office of all knowledge is to open the way to a clearer vision of the truth and mind of God. The student of the life of Jesus welcomes all mental culture. Every acquisition assists him to express the spiritual greatness of the Son of God. Every gem may be set in the crown to be placed upon his brow. Schleiermacher has beautifully said, that "all our progress in divine knowledge consists solely in more correctly understanding, and more completely appropriating to ourselves, that which is in Christ." This is the grand lesson which Christianity proposes to all hearts and all ages. For as the mind of Christ shines out in unclouded splendor, it will melt the coldest heart, and cause the flowers of heaven to bloom where all was desolation before.

The great aim in the administration of Christian truth is to reveal what Jesus was. And the great result to be attained is to reproduce the consciousness of Christ in each human heart, and in the spirit of the world. The most complete definition of Christian Salvation is, "The life of Christ in the human soul." There can be no salvation except in man's continual approximation to that result. There is no exact description of the life of a redeemed soul. There can be none. The idea of its life is to be developed from within. It requires no fixed nor conceivable routine of action, but an ever-living spirit. Jesus does not even ask an imitation of his own acts of love. He infuses the divine sentiment itself, to open ever-enlarging conceptions of its boundless applications, and inspires man with the glorious aim of becoming a coworker with God. So it is with every element of the life of God in the soul of man. It transcends the limits of all routine. It snaps the bonds of forms. It is a "worship in spirit and in truth." The highest genius could no more describe the measure of its action, than it could predict the blessed ministries of an angelic nature, in the yet unknown scenes of its future being. It is unfolded from within. It is the coming of the spirit of Christ into the bosom of human nature, to suggest his thoughts of truth, his conceptions of duty, in the midst of the work which is given to man to do.

Here is the power which has accomplished moral miracles, and will complete the renovation of the race. What has made the world new in the spirit of its civilization, in all that chiefly distinguishes it, since the day of Jesus? The light even now obtained, with its imperfect knowledge of Christ, has shone upon its conscience to produce all its great moral reformations. What great transforming influence may not be traced to this! Jesus identified himself

with humanity, and sacrificed himself for its redemption. That fact contains a Gospel concerning the destiny and worth of human nature. The world beholds that Gospel, and begins to feel its influence. Tyranny relaxes its iron rule, and wields its sceptre for the welfare of its subject millions. Man begins to know the glory of the mind, and whatever can unfold its power is pressed upon his conscience with increasing force. The love of freedom moves the heart of nations gradually to diffuse its untold blessings upon an emancipated world. The Church beholds and more deeply feels that Gospel, and pours out its treasures to raise the Cross in every heathen land. Ministries of charity to the sufferer, the prisoner, the slave, fill the world; ministries which shall never cease until every obedient soul becomes an angel of the love of God, and healing and deliverance are bestowed upon each diseased and burdened heart. Even the intellectual cultivation, the triumphs of science and art, in which we boast, are the spreading circle of the same spiritual power as it moves over the sea of life. It is not an accidental fact that so great an intellectual life existed in the bosom of Puritanism, where religious life was so intense. Religion as Form and Dogma may forge the heaviest chain for human nature, because its links are fastened by a supernatural power. Religion as Principle, Free Thought, electrifies humanity; and multitudes feel the shock who never recognize the source of that holy fire.

Even this dim Christian consciousness has been the choicest benediction to the world; and in hearts which yielded to its higher influence, how glorious has been its work! Conceive of every triumph of Christian faith, every act of truth unknown to men, yet honored in heaven, — remember every martyr's suffering, to estimate its influence. It has unfolded itself in believing hearts to fulfil the divine

promise of Jesus, and instruct them what to say and to do in every trial-moment. It has impressed the conviction of the majesty of truth, and in the hours when the disciple stood between the crown and the cross neither temptation nor fear shook his steadfast soul. It has revealed the glory of the Redeemer's meekness, until men could live or die amidst revilings, only to answer by serenity and prayer. It has presented the image of his resignation, until human hearts could speak the sweetest words of submission while a bloody sweat was upon the brow. It has created apostles, saints, the innumerable hosts of true disciples, who have walked through the world in the spirit of purity, to be clothed above in robes of white.

Christian Salvation is Christ's own life in human hearts. The statement brings new support to the doctrine which we have now presented. A routine of action may be learned and taught by some other process. A living consciousness, a new germ of life which is ever to expand into vaster proportions and higher beauty, is created by the direct presence and action of Life itself. Christendom is to obey the impulse which has moved it hitherto. Let it still look up to Jesus, the great expression of the truth and life of God, with adoring heart. Thus shall Christ indeed become "a real presence" in the Church and in the world; revealing, to an ever-purer consciousness, the truths which even now we cannot bear, and leading us on to the day in which all hearts shall be one in him.

1st Series. No. 285.

THE

TWENTY-SEVENTH REPORT

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

WITH THE

ADDRESSES AT THE ANNIVERSARY,

MAY 25, 1852.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,
111 WASHINGTON STREET.
JUNE, 1852.

Price 3 Cents.

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PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY.

The Twenty-seventh Anniversary of the American Unitarian Association was celebrated May 25th, 1852.

The meeting for business was held in the Bedford Street Chapel, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

The meeting was called to order by the President, and prayer was offered by Rev. Joseph Richardson, of Hingham. The record of the last annual meeting was read. After which the Report of the Executive Committee was presented by the Secretary, and portions of it were read. The Treasurer's Report was then read, and referred to Messrs. Nathaniel A. Barrett and John H. Rogers, as auditors.

The Association then proceeded to the choice of officers. A Committee of Nomination was appointed. Rev. Charles Brooks having declined a reëlection, the following gentlemen, whose names were presented to the meeting, were chosen officers for the ensuing year.

PRESIDENT.

Rev. Samuel K. Lothrop, of Boston.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

Hon. Stephen Fairbanks, of Boston.
Rev. Edward B. Hall, D. D., of Providence, R. I.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Isaiah Bangs, Esq., of Cambridge,
Hon. Albert Fearing, of Boston,
Rev. Henry A. Miles, D. D., of Lowell, } *Directors.*
Rev. George W. Briggs, of Plymouth,
Rev. William R. Alger, of Roxbury,

Henry P. Fairbanks, Esq., of Charlestown, *Treasurer.*
Rev. Calvin Lincoln, of Boston, *Secretary.*

The usual business having been transacted, the Association adjourned to meet at the Federal Street Meeting-house, at 7½ o'clock.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee, in the afternoon, Rev. Charles Briggs was appointed to perform the duties of Assistant Secretary.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

Statement of the Receipts and Expenditures of the American Unitarian Association, for the Year ending May 25th, 1852.

RECEIPTS.

Balance in the Treasury, May 27th, 1851, as per account then rendered,		$385.49
From Auxiliary Associations and Annual Subscribers,	$746.68	
" Societies, by Contribution and Subscription,	3,303.37	
" Societies and Individuals, for Churches needing aid,	185.00	
" Societies and Individuals, for Theological Education,	158.00	
" Sales of Books, principally Channing's Works,	623.98	
" Sales of Tracts,	94.73	
" Donations,	180.00	
" Life Members,	321.00	
" Interest of Permanent Fund,	755.00	
		6,367.76
" Borrowed Money,		1,500.00
" Balance due the Treasurer,		36.23
		$8,289.48

EXPENDITURES.

For Printing and Binding Tracts,	$917.24	
" Channing's Works and other Books for Sale and Distribution,	412.20	
" Salary of General Secretary,	1,500.00	
" " " Assistant "	500.00	
" Travelling Expenses of Secretary and Members of the Executive Committee,	176.13	
" Expenses of Delegates to Cincinnati Convention,	100.00	
Amount carried forward,	3,605.57	

Amount brought forward,	$ 3,605.57		
For Rent of Office,	350.00		
" Incidental Expenses,	159.16		
" Interest on Borrowed Money,	35.75		
		$ 4,150.48	
For Missionary Purposes, viz.: —			
Rev. I. Codding,	$ 558.83		
" G. W. Webster,	100.00		
" T. D. Howard,	50.00		
" S. Saltmarsh,	50.00		
" C. H. Dall,	20.00		
" M. De Lange,	19.00		
" W. W. Hebbard,	15.50		
		813.33	
For Theological Education, viz.: —			
Meadville School, for Salary of Principal,	$ 250.00		
" " " Education of Students,	252 00		
		502.00	
For Aid of Unitarian Society in Nashville, Tenn.,	200.00		
" " " " Lockport, Ill.,	100.00		
" " " " Rockford, "	50.00		
" " " " Cannelton, Ind.,	100.00		
" " " " Wheeling, Va.,	62.00		
" " " " Pittsburg, Pa.,	150.00		
" " " " Jefferson, N. Y.,	79.17		
" " " " Bridgeport, Conn.,	240.00		
" " " " Brooklyn, "	150.00		
" " " " Southington, "	100.00		
" " " " Hartford, "	500.00		
" " " " Bucksport, Me.,	150.00		
" " " " Topsham, "	75.00		
" " " " Bath, "	470.00		
" " " " Calais, "	67.50		
" " " " Greenfield, Mass.,	50.00		
" " " " Rowe, "	50.00		
" " " " Athol, "	50.00		
" " " " Westboro', "	30.00		
" " " " Mansfield, "	100.00		
" " " " So. Natick, "	50.00		
		2,823.67	
		$ 8,289.48	

Appropriations made, but not yet drawn from the Treasury : —

For Aid of Society in	Bucksport, Me.,	$ 100.00
" " "	Calais, "	100.00
" " "	Greenfield, Mass.,	50.00
" " "	New Salem, "	100.00
" " "	Clinton, "	200.00
		$ 550.00

Er. Ex.

H. P. FAIRBANKS, *Treasurer.*

Boston, May 25th, 1851.

Boston, June 3d, 1852. The undersigned have examined the accounts of the Treasurer for the year ending May 25, 1852, and find the same to be correctly cast and properly vouched.

N. A. Barrett,
John H. Rogers, } *Auditors.*

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

THROUGH the kindness of Divine Providence, we are brought to the close of another year of our associated existence. The occasion invites us to consider the purpose for which our Association was formed, to review the measures which we have employed to accomplished its objects, to inquire what are the special demands which now address us as a Christian denomination, and to acknowledge the goodness of God in all of success that has attended our labors, and in all of prosperity with which our churches have been blest.

The American Unitarian Association was organized for the diffusion of Christian truth and the promotion of Christian piety. Keeping these objects steadily in mind, the Executive Committee during the past year have not been studious of change in their modes of operation. While adhering to the general course of former years, which experience had shown to be judicious and efficient, they have been ever ready so to vary their measures as to meet those new exigencies and modes of thought which from time to time are manifest where the common mind is both free and active.

Cherishing these views, the Committee have thought it

an object of primary importance to awaken in the churches of our faith a strong interest in effecting those objects for which our Association was formed. They have been deeply solicitous that the true character of our work should be understood, that the relations of the Association to the religious interests of our country should be made plain, and that it should be seen and felt throughout the denomination, as it is constantly shown by our correspondence, that there is a great and increasing demand for that class of benevolent operations contemplated by our organization. With the vast increase of population in our land, and the growing spirit of freedom in the world, there are constantly arising new forms of thought and opinion in regard to man's highest duties and most sacred relations. Time-hallowed institutions are rudely assailed, doctrines long revered are denied. Should it be said that evidence is wanting of deep research and patient study, there is abundant evidence of bold questioning and free inquiry. In this condition of society a broad field for Christian enterprise and activity opens before us. And we would not have it thought that our existence is perpetuated chiefly to maintain a position hostile to other denominations, or that we may occasionally issue a sharp polemic tract on doctrinal theology. For our Association there is a higher work. Representing a body of disciples who may claim, without boasting on the one hand, or affected humility on the other, a common measure of intelligence, we would interpret the Gospel to the growing intelligence of our country. Believing in the divine authority of Christianity, we would furnish to inquirers the means of understanding the claims of our religion to a divine origin. Our Association, in the name of benevolent Christian hearts, would become the medium of light to the darkened mind,

of peace and hope to the disturbed and heavy-laden spirit. Believing that purposes thus exalted were contemplated by the founders of our society, we introduce this topic thus early in our Report, because we trust that the work in which we are engaged, if clearly understood, will secure the approving judgment, the cordial sympathy, and the active coöperation of the enlightened and liberal men of our denomination.

With such views, the Executive Committee have commenced and prosecuted the work assigned them for the last year.

We have continued to circulate our standard works, and often receive very gratifying accounts of their wide distribution and salutary influence.

There has been an increased demand for the tracts of the Association, and they have been very widely scattered for gratuitous distribution. We have felt the more called upon to supply this want, as the Book and Pamphlet Society has transferred the contents of its shelves to our depository.

The Committee have been often invited to consider the wants of feeble societies in New England. These churches are usually found to exist as fragments of some of our ancient territorial parishes. While newly received opinions have withdrawn a portion of a once united people from the altar which their fathers reared, and the love of many has waxed cold, a few remain faithful supporters of the institutions of our religion. They would secure for their children, and retain for themselves, the hallowing influences exerted by the worship of the Lord's day. To this class of societies we have made appropriations, guided in the amount given by the resources of the Association and the relative claim of the applicants for aid.

In the more recently settled portions of our country,

similar appropriations are made with the prospect of seeing the newly established society, at no distant time, able to sustain Christian worship without foreign assistance.

The pecuniary difficulties which often embarrass the student in theology have not been overlooked by the Committee. The trials and claims of these young men to the kind consideration of the charitable have been made known in the addresses made by the Secretary to our churches. Such appeals have not been in vain. We have thought it a work in harmony with the design of our Association, to become the medium of communicating from the friends of our religion the needed assistance to those men who are hereafter to become the preachers of this religion.

Owing to the facility of communication with the adjacent country, large numbers who formerly resided in the city have now established their home in its vicinity. While this state of things may have impaired the strength of some religious societies in the metropolis, it has given occasion for new societies in the neighborhood of Boston, and added very materially to the strength of some of our older congregations.

The church commenced during the year in Cambridge, by a new and promising society, has been completed, and is now open for the stated services of religion.

In the rapidly increasing village at Newton Corner, a society has been organized under favorable circumstances, with the promise of the speedy erection of a church and the settlement of a minister.

The societies at East Boston and Chelsea during the past year have had valuable accessions to their numbers, have obtained permanent pastors, and are actively engaged in arrangements for the erection of suitable houses of worship.

At Winchendon, in the interior of the State, a society, commenced a few years since, has been reorganized, and is about settling a minister under very favorable auspices.

The new society at Bath, Me. has, during the year, greatly increased in numbers, erected a commodious church, and is now favored with a ministry that promises to be permanent.

The church commenced by the society at Wheeling, Va., the last year, has just been completed and a minister settled.

The societies at Detroit, Mich., Cannelton, Ind., and Savannah, Ga., are now in a prosperous condition, and have procured the labors of earnest and efficient pastors.

We have favorable accounts of the newly established society at Nashville, Tenn.

A new impulse has been given to the society at Mobile by the ministrations of the past winter, and the great want now of this society is a settled pastor.

The churches of our faith throughout the entire West have never before given equal evidence of a healthy growth. At the Convention held at Cincinnati the present month, the reports made by their representatives afford conclusive proof of their prosperity.

The missionary movements of the Association, although comparatively limited in extent, have been followed by the most encouraging results. Besides the occasional services of settled ministers, we have employed one missionary for the year in the State of Illinois. His marked ability and zeal have commanded attention throughout the large circle of towns in which he has labored.

The last autumn, the Secretary, in a journey through Maine, was requested to procure a preacher for a town on the extreme eastern borders of that State, — a town contain-

ing from twelve to fifteen hundred inhabitants, and yet without a minister. The Executive Committee appropriated fifty dollars in response to this application. A clergyman was employed for missionary labor in this field. The interest awakened by his services was so general and strong, that, on the close of his engagement as a missionary, he was engaged by the people to whom he had been sent, for one year.

During the year several churches, whose growth and prosperity had been materially retarded by pecuniary embarrassment, have, by their own efforts and the liberality of sister societies, become entirely free from debt. More than thirty thousand dollars have been raised for objects of this description in our denomination, in New England and New York, including from two to three thousand contributed to aid the liberal and enterprising society at Syracuse, N. Y., whose church had been recently destroyed.

In this diversion of funds to local objects, and in the unwonted pressure in the money market, we account for the fact that our own receipts, as will be shown by the Treasurer's Report, have fallen below the amount of some preceding years. We rely the more readily on this explanation, as there has been no single Sunday of the year on which some one of our churches has not been freely opened, that the purposes and needs of the Association might be stated. We think it pertinent in this connection to remark, that in our larger towns and cities a Ministry at Large is sustained by the churches of our denomination. These objects of local interest have unquestionably absorbed large contributions, which otherwise would have been added to the funds of the Association. It gives us much satisfaction to state, that during the past winter application has very frequently been

made at our office for information and counsel in regard to the great doctrines of our religion, and the great duties of the Christian life. To answer such inquiries, the office has been open during the afternoon for several months of the year.

It gives us pleasure to state, that Augustus Graham, Esq., of Brooklyn, N. Y., a man of great liberality, has by will left ten thousand dollars to the Association.

We also learn incidentally, that from the estate of the late Dr. Thomas of Tyngsboro' we shall receive a small bequest.

In the present condition of our churches, and in the existing state of religious opinion in our country, your Committee find a manifest demand for a closer alliance among the members of our body, and a large increase of denominational activity. We believe that the members of our Unitarian societies should all unite with energy in executing the work to which in the providence of God we are now called. We would see all those who adhere to the great principles and doctrines which distinguish us as a body of disciples, coöperating to support these principles and to disseminate these doctrines. We would not encourage that zeal which is narrow, denunciatory, and aggressive; but we do urge united and earnest action in discharging our own obligations, in doing our own work. Such united action is needed to sustain a true life in our own societies. Can we love the truth, and not pray for its diffusion? Can we appreciate, to any extent, the value of the Gospel, and not labor for its more complete establishment? It is thought that great changes have been effected in the opinions of the prevailing denominations of Christians in our land. So much is doubtless true. Has not this result been produced by means of the past efforts of our own body? Shall we discontinue our labors because

they have hitherto been productive of good? Will inaction in the cause of freedom and charity hasten the time when sectarian barriers shall be universally thrown down? But allowing that we have no special work to perform in the cause of truth and freedom, can we with honor to our own principles, with a true allegiance to the authority of our faith, remain idle spectators of the struggle going on between truth and error, worldliness and spirituality, leaving to other divisions of the Church the labor, resigning to them the privilege, of becoming coworkers with God in establishing on earth the kingdom of his Son?

Another consideration shows the demand which there is for earnest, united action, by the members of the Unitarian body. From our correspondence, and from personal inquiries at our office, we are authorized in asserting the existence in every part of our land of a large and increasing class of minds, who fail to receive a vitalizing influence from the great truths and spiritual ideas of our religion, because these truths and ideas are obscured, and shorn of their power, by the speculative doctrines in which they are embodied, doctrines which appear to them as unscriptural and unreasonable. Men of this description are found in large numbers, among the intelligent and well educated, and especially among those in the forming period of life. Such minds can oftentimes accept as true the positive instructions of our faith; and by the quickening power of these instructions may be saved from worldliness and unbelief. Can we then innocently retire from a field of usefulness in which Divine Providence so manifestly commands us to labor? That our efforts may be effective, our moral forces must be concentrated and our religious charities united.

The Committee are happy to discover the evident signs

of a growing unanimity of thought, opinion, and feeling on those great doctrines which are suited to awaken a true life in the soul, around which the affections may be fastened, doctrines which in their positive exhibition may become both the basis of union and the incentive to untiring activity. For it is true that our continued existence and progress as a denomination are naturally tending, as has been the case in the life and history of all sects, to produce a more positive form of doctrine, to bring out our religious opinions in their express and direct, rather than their negative and antagonistic relations. The first natural tendency of a division in a large body of Christians, like that of the old Congregationalists of Massachusetts, is to make both parties run into the extremes of divergence, and dwell upon the points which each denies and in which each stands in opposition to the other, rather than to live in the power and unfold the direct force and beauty of the positive truth which each believes. Such was the effect of the separation which took place some thirty years ago between the Orthodox and Unitarian Congregationalists of Massachusetts, or at least, we may say, it was the effect produced upon ourselves. From this antagonistic condition and tendency we are and have been for some time recovering; and now the positive force and beauty of our religious opinions are more dwelt upon, unfolded, and experienced, and are producing, we trust, a deeper and holier spiritual life among us.

The prevailing tone of feeling and opinion in the denomination in relation to Jesus Christ affords an interesting illustration of this point. In denying the Trinity, and the Orthodox view of the nature of Christ, and kindred topics, we naturally passed to the other extreme, and regarded Christianity too much as an abstract system of truth, rather than

truth, gathering around the life and character of Christ, and deriving its vital, quickening power from its connection with the facts and incidents of his history as the incarnate Son of God. But Christ is the central point and power of his Gospel; and we find that our simple and positive view, both of himself and his office, as the *One* Mediator between God and man, the well-beloved Son, whom the Father sent into the world to suffer and to die, the just *for* the unjust, that he might bring us to God, — the more it is felt and apprehended, the more full is it of a quickening and regenerating power. We do not stop — it is not necessary — to reduce all our thoughts upon this theme, by a sharp analysis, to logical precision, but yielding to the emotions which the simple history of Christ in the Gospels, read for a practical, and not a doctrinal purpose, naturally awakens, we find in these emotions an inspiring element of Christian love and faith.

That Christ is *not* God, not the second person in the Trinity, — this is a mere negation, without power. We dwell upon the positive fact, that he is the great manifestation of God in the flesh, the image and representation of God to us. In his words we have the Divine wisdom, and in his character we read and understand the Divine attributes, and behold in him a union with the Father, which makes him, in reality, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. The *why* and the *how* Christ died for us, whether as an expiation, or a substitution, or satisfaction, — speculative questions, — we leave them to speculation. We are penetrated with the simple fact that he *did* die for us, that that holy one of God, that that beautiful, blameless, and beneficent life ended in intense agony upon the cross, for our sakes; and in that cross we find a reconciling power. It speaks to our affections; it touches our consciences; it

brings us in humility and penitence to the very presence of the Father, where Christ is, an ever-living intercessor and advocate for us. Christianity becomes to us, not a mere system of moral and religious truth which Christ communicated, but a system of truth which he embodied and exhibited, which gathers around, enters into, emanates from, the great facts of his history; and as such, holding him high up as an object of exalted reverence, love, gratitude, faith, it has power over our souls.

This tendency to dwell upon and unfold the simple and positive side of our faith is everywhere manifest, and the Committee express the hope, that a more positive faith will be followed by more direct and systematic efforts in our societies to coöperate in the great work of evangelizing our entire country. The missionary enterprise appeals for sympathy and support to every Christian heart. It calls upon us, by our regard for all that is worth preserving in the institutions of our country, by our interest in the forming civilization of a mighty nation, by the spirit of fraternal love, which our religion enjoins, and by our allegiance to Him who died that we might live, to send forth the messengers of divine truth, throughout the length and breadth of our land. From the east and the west we hear the declaration, "The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few." Into this broad and promising field our fellow-Christians of other denominations have freely entered. We honor their devotedness, and we rejoice in their success. Not to oppose their efforts, but to extend the power of truth, would we give to the cause of missions our cordial support. When the missionary spirit shall have established itself in the heart of our churches; when, for the sake of humanity, for the salvation of souls, for the honor of Christ, all shall fervently

pray, and cheerfully work, and freely give, the rich man of his abundance, and the poor man of his penury, then indeed shall we become a truly prosperous denomination. The promise of our ascended Redeemer will be verified, "Lo, I am with you alway"; for we shall be found obeying the command given to his followers, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

NOTE.

The Executive Committee earnestly invite the coöperation of our churches in the great cause which the American Unitarian Association aims to promote, viz. the spread of Christ's Gospel and the promotion of Christian righteousness and piety. This Association has now been in existence more than twenty-five years. Experience has shown, that it is an organization adequate, if furnished with means, to the largest measure of activity and the widest field of operation. Gratifying evidence of the increase both of confidence in the Association, and of a more earnest missionary spirit in the denomination is afforded by the fact, that two thirds of all the funds raised in its behalf have been contributed during the last ten years. Our churches in the country and in our large cities have been freely open for the Secretary of the Association to present the claims of the great cause which all should do something to promote. He will hold himself in readiness to embrace any opportunity of this kind, that may be offered during the present year. It is hoped, that from every congregation which he addresses there will be a hearty response, and a sum contributed commensurate with its ability, and in harmony with the injunction, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

PUBLIC MEETING.

The Public Meeting of the Association was held on the evening of the 25th of May, in the Federal Street Meeting-house, at 7½ o'clock. Prayer was offered by Rev. James W. Thompson, D. D., of Salem. The Annual Report of the Executive Committee was read by the Secretary. The President, Rev. Mr. Lothrop, stated that no resolutions had been prepared or would be offered; but that gentlemen had been invited to speak on the prominent topics presented in the Report. These were three: — 1st. The demand for denominational, religious activity. 2d. The practical view of Christ's character as the central truth of the Gospel. 3d. Missionary effort. The President introduced, as the first speaker, Hon. Samuel Hoar of Concord, who moved the acceptance of the Report, and said: —

He did not feel at liberty to decline an injunction coming from such a quarter on such an occasion. It was not from modesty, but because of its truth, that he said that the talking apparatus was apt to be active after the thinking power was weakened; and it might be so in his case. He had never listened to a report which better met his views than the one just read. It presented the true, great object of life; for what should that object be if not the Christian aim? It presented also the relation the Saviour bears to Christianity. He is the religion he taught; the spirit of Jesus is

the religion of Jesus. Having the spirit of the author of our faith, the thing named follows of course. If you believe in Christ, and have his spirit, you will be active in his cause; otherwise, you are a pretender, and have not yet entered the Christian school. What we want in our denomination is neither more nor less than what is wanted in all denominations. Intellectually, he had no doubt about our views. If he was ever led to question, it was because sometimes there might seem to be a want of earnestness; that we don't believe as we should that Jesus is Christianity, and have not his spirit. So far as this is the case, it is no matter what our creed is. The Church is better without us than with us. Looking as we must at the fruits, there may be doctrinal error, and yet the right spirit, in many who will give the Church their hearty support, and be wherever a Christian influence is to to be exerted.

Rev. Mr. Hedge of Providence next addressed the meeting.

He would ask, What should their denominational activity be? Should it be propagandism and proselytism? If the quality of the denomination was to be judged by its activity in this respect, it could not claim a very high rank in the ecclesiastical world. He said they were not a proselyting sect, not a society of propagandists, never had been such, and, as he believed, never could be, consistently with their position. It was a remarkable fact, that the proselyting zeal in religious sects had generally been in inverse ratio to the purity of their faith. But there was an important distinction between proselyting zeal and missionary action; the former aiming to break up a settled faith, and to draw its believers over to some other faith; the latter being a species of activity which meets a want understood already to exist. This was the kind of action which, as a denomination, they were called to engage in, and which was perfectly consistent with their position, not as a sect, not as Unitarians, but as Christians; and they were to engage in this species of action simply because Christianity exists by self-communication; that is the condition of its continued

existence in the world; and the moment the Christian Church ceases to be missionary, it ceases to exist as a positive religion.

Their denomination, then, must be missionary. And under what conditions? In the first place, it should be consistent. They must act historically, in conformity with their own past, with the organic ideas of their religion; and in order to that, they must understand their whereabouts. Now, he would ask, what was this specific thing that they represented? what was their work in the Christian world, — their aim, on which they founded their right *to be?* Like all other denominations, they had a negative and positive side; the former being their protest against what they believed to be the errors of the elder Church, — not only against prelacy, but against spiritual domination of every kind; and the latter including the two ideas, first, that Christianity is progressive; that at no period of its history can it be said to have reached its consummation; and second, that Christianity is a charity, a philanthropy, essentially humanitarian in its character. The speaker said, that he thought they, as a denomination, might claim to have endeavored to be faithful to this idea; and that they had taken an active part in all the philanthropic movements of the day, and in some taken the lead. He urged that their activity must be consistent with this position, negative and positive; that they must be true to themselves, and act in obedience to the organic ideas of their denomination; and the most effective means to be used for prosecuting their work, he thought, were the same that they had been using for the last twenty years, — the publication of tracts and books explanatory of their idea of Christian truth and education.

These were the two great engines of propagandism, and were entirely consistent with their position. Although they had already done much, they might still greatly increase their action in this way. The speaker extended his remarks upon these points, strongly urging the necessity of wider education. He said, if they could only hold their own, they would have nothing to fear; but they had not always done that. The young of their Church were going forth into other communions; but this would not happen if

they had received such education as their denomination might impart to them. Let the Sunday School education be systematic; and in this connection he hoped that the time would come when the instruction of the young would be more in the hands of the pastor than at present.

He said that the Association had existed about a quarter of a century, and it could not be denied that it had done a great work. These walls, he said, reminded him that a great work had been done. The production of such a mind and such a life as that of Dr. Channing, whom he considered as the truest type of Unitarian Christianity, was of itself — had nothing else been accomplished — a great work. Moreover, it had done a great work in multiplying the views and doctrines of other denominations. Compare the state of the theology of New England then and now, and the truth of the remark would be seen. He closed by seconding the motion for the acceptance of the Report.

Rev. Edward E. Hale of Worcester was then introduced.

He said that he was always inclined to see the positive side, and would speak of the positive side of our operations. We were trying to lift up the civilization of the world. We should inquire what was the course of the ark of the world's salvation. Those who row the material side are working vigorously, with even and powerful strokes of their oars. We are on the spiritual side to do the same; to see that they have not been pulling us round. The voice of Christianity to civilization is, "Friend, come up higher." We want to lift men up physically, intellectually, morally. "The kingdom of heaven *cometh*," — is always advancing; but sometimes the advance is hardly visible. The speaker illustrated this by a graphic description of the letting in of the Cochituate water into the conduit, and picturing the slowness with which, to eager spectators, it covered the bottom, and began to fill the reservoir, twenty-five acres in extent; seeming for a long time only trickling rills or a shallow, muddy pool. It was thus during the first three centuries with Christianity as it flowed out into the world. But it will roll

on, increasing and deepening as it spreads, as long as the throne of God shall endure, or the Son of God shall live to make intercession for us. What way shall we help this progress? It must startle the angels to hear such a question. Is the world, sitting down, to lift itself up? Where is the external point for our levers to rest on? Where do we get our own motives? Our venerable friend has told us how or by what force the work is to be done. How can we preach except we believe? and we must preach the faith which has saved us, or not preach at all.

Rev. Andrew P. Peabody of Portsmouth was then invited by the President to speak on the practical view of Christ's character, and remarked in substance as follows: —

Christ is his religion. Christianity consists, not of abstract principles, but of mercy and truth made incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth.

Through Jesus alone is the personality of God revealed to us. Independently of the Gospel, the tendency of cultivated minds is toward Pantheism. Plato and his disciples were Pantheists. In modern Christendom, wherever historical Christianity has been set aside, the movement has been in that direction. The rationalism of Germany, for the most part, ignores a personal Deity considered as a distinct object of reverence, worship, and prayer. Pantheism is in fact the religion of nature. The Almighty is hidden from mortal eye behind the springs, within the wheels of the mechanism of the universe. By miracle, and, above all, by personal manifestation, as through Christ, he detaches himself from his works, and becomes a separate object of intelligence, homage, and confidence.

Jesus, too, not his words, but his living, dying, loving personality, is essential to our repose under the burden of repented sin. Sacrifice is the language of love. The parent makes sacrifices for his children, the patriot for his country, the philanthropist for his race. It is sacrifice alone that can make love felt, or render it the object of assured trust. In the death of Christ, God speaks to

man in the well-understood language of sacrifice, and gives us the pledge of his pardoning mercy in the only form in which man could fully appreciate it and repose upon it with entire satisfaction.

Jesus also is our hope of immortality. We are not insensible to the analogies of nature or the tendencies and aspirations of humanity, that point to continued and renewed existence. But such considerations come most promptly to our minds in our unburdened and happy seasons. In the time of need we demand personal assurance. We crave to see immortality brought to light, the eternal life made manifest; and can derive immeasurably more support and consolation from a single glance of realizing faith at the broken sepulchre of Jesus, than from the whole array of natural arguments for immortality.

Finally, we rely on the personal presence and sympathy of Jesus. Our religion binds us to the Son no less than to the Father. In duty and in conflict, he treads the wine-press at our side. And as we look forward to death, it is not on the abstract truths of his Gospel that we rely for support, but on his personal guidance through the valley of the shadow; and our dearest hopes are all expressed when we can say to the Good Shepherd, "I will fear no evil; for thou art with me."

Rev. Rush R. Shippen of Chicago, Ill. was invited to address the meeting on the need of missionary labor in the West.

He thanked the Association, in behalf of his brethren of the West, for the aid which had been extended to them by the Unitarians of New England. He could not claim to be a representative of the West, — that mighty region which reaches from lake to gulf, that young giant of the world, — but in its obligations to them, in its gratitude, its reverence, its sympathy, he might claim to be its fair, though humble representative. In regard to the wants of the West, one word, he said, was sufficient. What did they want? Every thing that man wants. Of the material advantages of civilization, of every thing conducive to worldly progress, they were fast obtaining an abundance. But for spiritual nutri-

ment the Western people were yet hungering and thirsting ; and the supply of that want still devolved, in large part, upon the Unitarians of New England.

The Report of the Executive Committee was then unanimously accepted ; and the meeting was closed by singing the Doxology.

ACT OF INCORPORATION.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven.

An Act to incorporate the American Unitarian Association.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows: — Section 1. Charles Briggs, Samuel K. Lothrop, Henry P. Fairbanks, their associates and successors, are hereby made a corporation, by the name of the American Unitarian Association, with all the powers and privileges, and subject to all the duties, liabilities, and restrictions, set forth in the forty-fourth chapter of the Revised Statutes; and said corporation may hold real and personal estate to the value of fifty thousand dollars, to be devoted exclusively to the promotion of the interests of moral and religious instruction. Section 2. All donations, devises, and bequests of real and personal estate, which may heretofore have been made to the American Unitarian Association, or to the Executive Committee thereof, shall be and enure to the use and benefit of the corporation hereby created, to be appropriated, however, to the purposes designated in any other donation, devise, or bequest. Section 3. This Act shall take effect from and after its passage.

House of Representatives, March 3d, 1847. Passed to be enacted.

EBEN. BRADBURY, *Speaker.*

In Senate, March 4, 1847. Passed to be enacted.

W. B. CALHOUN, *President.*

March 4th, 1847. Approved.

GEO. N. BRIGGS.

Secretary's Office, March 5, 1847.

I certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the original Act.

JOHN G. PALFREY,
Secretary of the Commonwealth.

BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE 1. The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure

Christianity throughout our country; and all Unitarian Christians in the United States shall be invited to unite and coöperate with it for that purpose.

Art. 2. An annual subscription of one dollar shall constitute a person a member so long as such subscription be paid, and a subscription of thirty dollars shall constitute a person a member for life.

Art. 3. The officers shall be a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and five Directors, two of whom, at least, shall be laymen. These officers shall be chosen by ballot, at the annual meeting, and shall hold their offices for one year, or till others be chosen in their stead.

Art. 4. These officers shall constitute an Executive Committee, who shall meet at least once in each month, and shall have charge of all the business and interests of the Association, the direction of its funds and operations, with power to fill any vacancies that may occur in their number, between any two annual meetings, and to call special meetings of the corporation whenever they shall deem it necessary or expedient.

Art. 5. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a full record of the meetings of the corporation, and of the Executive Committee; to conduct the correspondence of the Association, and keep an accurately arranged file of the same; and in general to perform such services, to suggest, devise, and execute, under the direction of the Executive Committee, such plans and measures, as shall, in their judgment, tend to promote the objects of the Association, increase its usefulness, and enlarge the sphere of its influence; and his salary shall be determined by vote of the corporation at the annual meeting.

Art. 6. The annual meeting of the Association shall be held on the Tuesday before the last Wednesday in May, at nine o'clock, A. M., at such place in the city of Boston as the Executive Committee may appoint, of which due notice shall be given by advertisement in two or more newspapers published in Boston, at least ten days previous.

Art. 7. Any amendment of these articles, proposed at one annual meeting, may be adopted at the next, if a majority of the members present vote in favor of it.

CLERGYMEN MEMBERS FOR LIFE.

The following clergymen have been made members for life of the Association, by the donation of thirty dollars or more, principally from ladies of their respective societies.

Abbot, Abiel, D. D.
Adams, Edwin G.
Alden, Seth
Alger, Horatio
Alger, William R.
Allen, Joseph, D. D.
Allen, Joseph H.
Allen, T. Prentiss
*Andrews, William
Arnold, Augustus C. L.
Babbidge, Charles
*Bancroft, Aaron, D. D.
Barrett, Samuel, D. D.
Barry, William
*Bartlett, John
Bartol, G. W.
*Bascom, Ezekiel L.
Bates, Reuben
Bellows, Henry W.
Bigelow, Andrew, D. D.
Billings, Liberty
*Brazer, John, D. D.
Briggs, Charles
Brigham, Charles H.
Brooks, Charles
Brooks, Charles T.
Brown, Addison
Brown, J. F.
Buckingham, Edgar
Buckingham, J. A.
Bulfinch, S. G.
Burnap, George W.
Burton, Warren
Bush, S. W.
Chandler, Seth
*Channing, William E., D. D.
Clark, Amos
Clarke, Samuel
Cole, Jonathan
*Colman, Henry
Conant, A. H.
Coolidge, James I. T.
Cordner, John
Crafts, Eliphalet P.
Crosby, Jaazaniah
Cunningham, Francis
Cutler, Curtis
Cutler, R. P.
*Damon, David, D. D.
Davis, Hasbrouck
Dewey, Orville, D. D.
Doggett, Theophilus P.
*Edes, Edward H.
*Edes, Henry, D. D.
Edes, Henry F.
Ellis, George E.
Emmons, Henry
Everett, Oliver C.
Farley, Frederic A.
Field, Joseph, D. D.
*Flint, Jacob
Flint, James, D. D.

* Dead.

Fosdick, David
Fox, Thomas B.
Frost, Barzillai
Frothingham, William
Furness, William H., D. D.
Fuller, Arthur B.
Gage, Nathaniel
Gannett, Ezra S., D. D.
*Gannett, Thomas B.
Gray, Frederic T.
Greene, William B.
*Greenwood, F. W. P., D. D.
Hale, Edward E.
Hall, Edward B., D. D.
Hall, Nathaniel
Hamilton, Luther
Harrington, Joseph
Hedge, Frederic H.
Hill, Alonzo, D. D.
Hill, Thomas
Holland, Frederic W.
Hosmer, George W.
*Howe, Moses
Huntington, Frederic D.
Huntoon, Benjamin
Ingersoll, George G., D. D.
Johnson, Rufus A.
Judd, Sylvester
Kendall, James, D. D.
*Kinsley, W. H.
Knapp, Frederic N.
Lambert, Henry
Lamson, Alvan, D. D.
Lathrop, Thomas S.
Leonard, Levi W., D. D.
Lincoln, Calvin
*Little, Robert
Livermore, Abiel A.
Livermore, Leonard J.
Loring, Bailey
Lothrop, Samuel K.
Lunt, William P.
May, Samuel, Jr.
Merrick, John M.
Miles, Henry A., D. D.
Moore, Josiah
Morse, William
Moseley, William O.
Motte, Mellish I.
Muzzey, Artemas B.
Newell, William
Nichols, Ichabod, D. D.
Nightingale, Crawford
Noyes, George R., D. D.
Nute, Ephraim
Osgood, Joseph
Osgood, Peter
Osgood, Samuel
Palfrey, Cazneau
Palfrey, John G., D. D.
*Parker, Nathan, D. D.
Parker, Theodore
Parkman, Francis, D. D.
Parkman, John
*Peabody, Oliver W. B.
*Peabody, William B. O., D. D.
Peabody, Ephraim, D. D.
*Phipps, Harrison G. O.
Phipps, J. H.
Pierpont, John
Pike, Richard
Putnam, George, D. D.
Reynolds, Grindall
Richardson, James, Jr.
Richardson, Joseph
*Ripley, Ezra, D. D.
Ripley, George
*Ripley, Samuel
Robbins, Chandler
Robbins, Samuel D.

Robinson, Charles
*Rogers, Timothy F.
Sanger, Ralph
Sargent, John T.
Sears, Edmund H.
Sewall, Charles C.
Sewall, Edmund Q.
Shackford, Charles C.
Simmons, George F.
Smith, Amos
Smith, Joseph C.
Stearns, Oliver
Stebbins, Rufus P., D. D.
Stetson, Caleb
Stevens, Daniel W.
Stone, Edwin M.
*Storer, John P. B.
Sullivan, Thomas R.
Sweet, John D.
*Swett, William G.
Thayer, Christopher T.
*Thayer, Nathaniel, D. D.
Thomas, Moses G.
Thompson, James, D. D.
Thompson, James W., D. D.
Waite, Josiah K.
Walker, James, D. D.
*Ware, Henry, Jr., D. D.
*Ware, William
Waterston, R. C.
Weiss, John
Wellington, Charles
*Wells, George W.
Wheeler, A. D.
*White, John
White, William H.
*Whitman, Bernard
*Whitman, Jason
Whitman, Nathaniel
Whitney, Frederic A.
Whitwell, William A.
Williams, George A.
Willis, Martin W.
Willson, Edmund B.
*Withington, Hiram
Woodbury, Asa
Young, Alexander, D. D.
Young, Joshua

OTHER MEMBERS FOR LIFE.

Abbot, Ezra
Abbot, Harris
Abbot, Samuel
Abbott, Miss Abigail
Adams, Benjamin T.
Adams, James, Jr.
Adams, Philip
Adams, Zabdiel B.
Alger, Cyrus
Alger, Francis
Allen, G. M.
Ames, David W.
Ames, Mrs. David
Ames, Seth
Andrews, Ebenezer T.
Andrews, W. T.
Anthony, Edward
Appleton, Charles T.

Appleton, Francis
Appleton, J. R.
Appleton, Nathan
Appleton, Samuel
Aspinwall, Samuel
Atherton, Charles H.
Baker, Henry F.
Ball, S. S.
Bancroft, Mrs. B. D.
Bangs, Isaiah
Bangs, G. P.
Barker, Joseph A.
Barnard, George M.
Barnes, D. W.
Barnes, S. H.
Barnes, Miss Harriet
Barrett, Nathaniel A.
Bigelow, Alanson
Bigelow, John
*Bird, John H.
Bixby, Miss Keziah
Black, John
*Blake, Mrs. Sarah
Blanchard, Hezekiah
Blanchard, Joshua P.
Bliss, J. Lee
Bliss, Theodore
*Bond, George
Bond, George W.
Boutelle, Mrs. T. R.
*Bowditch, Nathaniel
Bowen, Tully D.
Bowles, Samuel
Boyd, Francis
Brackett, Samuel E.
Bradford, C. T.
*Bradlee, Joseph P.
Brewster, Oliver
Brewster, William
*Brooks, Peter C.
Brown, Mrs. Amy T.
Bryant, John
Bulloch, W. P.
Burgess, Mrs. A. E. P.
Carew, Joseph
Cartwright, Charles W.
Channing, Mrs. W. E.
Chapin, Harvey
*Chapman, Edmund A.
Chapman, Mrs. Jonathan
Chapman, Mrs. Margaret
Child, Mrs. John
*Child, Richards
Child, Mrs. Richards
Clapp, Miss Catherine
*Clapp, Joshua
Clapp, Mrs. Mary
Clarke, Mrs. Sarah
Cobb, Elijah
Coffin, George W.
Colton, George
Cooke, Mrs. Mary F.
*Coolidge, Joseph
*Cotton, John
Cotton, Joseph, Jr.
Crocker, George A.
Crocker, James H.
Crosby, William
Curtis, Mrs. Philip
Cushing, T. P.
Cushman, Henry W.
Dale, Samuel H.
Dana, Dexter
Danforth, Isaac
Dascomb, Thomas R.
Davis, Charles S.
Davis, James
Davis, James, Jr.

Davis, Joseph
Davis, J. Amory
Davis, Mrs. M. M.
Dean, Theodore
Denny, Daniel
Dillingham, Miss Eliza
Dix, Miss D.
Dorr, John
*Dorr, Samuel
Draper, James
Dwight, George
Dwight, Mrs. George
Dwight, Jonathan
Dwight, Mrs. Mary
Dwight, William
Eager, William
Edwards, Elisha
*Ellis, David
Ellis, Jonathan, Jr.
Emerson, George B.
Emmons, John L.
Everett, Miss Eliza G.
*Everett, Moses
*Everett, Otis
Fairbanks, Henry P.
Fairbanks, Mrs. Henry P.
Fairbanks, Stephen
Fairbanks, Mrs. Stephen
Farley, Mrs. Frederic A.
Faxon, Nathaniel
Fearing, Albert
Fisher, Joshua
*Fitch, Jeremiah
Foot, Homer
Foot, Mrs. Homer
Forster, Jacob
Foster, Charles A.
Foster, Charles W.
Fowle, C. S.
Fowler, James
Francis, Ebenezer
Frost, George
Gardner, John
Gardner, John L.
Gassett, Henry
Gilbert, B. R.
Gould, Benjamin A.
Gould, Mrs. Elizabeth
Gould, Lewis
Grant, Moses
*Gray, Harrison
Gray, John C.
Greele, Samuel
*Green, Ezra
Greene, Sarah
*Hall, Mrs. Edward B.
Hall, Jacob
Hall, Sarah B.
Hallett, George W.
Hamilton, Charles A.
Hammond, Daniel
*Hammond, Samuel
Hawes, Prince
Heath, Charles
*Hedge, Barnabas
Hendee, Charles J.
Hewes, Abraham, Jr.
Hewett, H. N.
Hickling, Charles
Hoar, Samuel
Hodges, George
Holbrook, Ann B.
Holland, Mrs. F. W.
Holmes, Benjamin
*Howard, Abraham
Howard, Charles
Howard, John
Howe, Gilbert H.

Howe, John
Howe, Zadock
Hull, Henry
Hunnewell, H. H.
Hunt, Nathaniel P.
Hurd, John
Inches, Henderson
Inches, Miss
Jackson, Charles
Jackson, Francis
Jarvis, Mrs. Leonard
Jernegan, Mrs. Mary
Johnson, James
Johnson, Mrs. J.
*Johnson, Milton
Jones, Miss Charlotte
Jones, Mrs. J. C.
Jones, Mrs. Sarah
Judd, Mrs. Sylvester
Kendall, Henry L.
Kettell, John P.
*King, Daniel P.
*King, Gedney
King, Samuel B.
Knight, William H.
Knight, Mrs. W. H.
Kuhn, George H.
Lamson, Benjamin
Lamson, Mrs. F. T.
Lamson, John
Lane, George
Lawrence, Abbott
Lawrence, Amos
*Lawrence, Luther
*Lawrence, William
Lee, Miss Rebecca
Leonard, Lemuel
Lewis, S. S.
Lewis, Mrs. S. S.
Lincoln, M. S.
Lincoln, Oliver
Little, J. L.
Livermore, Mrs. E. D.
Livermore, George
Livermore, Isaac
Lombard, Ammi C.
Lombard, William
Lord, George
Lord, Ivory
Lord, Mrs. Sarah C.
Loring, Benjamin
*Loring, J.
*Loring, William I.
Loud, Jacob H.
Low, A. A.
Low, Francis
Low, John J.
Low, Mrs. Rachel
Lowell, John A.
Mackay, R. C.
Manley, Mrs. Abigail
Manley, John R.
Manley, Miss Mary
Manning, Mrs. Elizabeth
Manning, F. C.
*Marsh, Ephraim
Mason, Earl P.
Matchett, Miss E. P.
*May, Joseph
May, Samuel
Mellen, Michael
*Metcalf, E. W.
Merrill, George
Miles, Mrs. Henry A.
Morgan, Charles W.
Morton, Ichabod
*Munson, Israel
Newell, J. R.

Newman, Henry
Newman, Miss Margaret
Newman, Miss Mary
*Nichols, Charles C.
Nichols, Miss C. K.
Olmsted, Charles H.
Orne, William W.
Osborn, Kendall
Osgood, Isaac
*Otis, Harrison G.
Owen, John
Parker, Daniel P.
*Parkman, George
*Parkman, Mrs. Sarah
*Parsons, Thomas
*Parsons, William
Paine, Daniel
*Peabody, Joseph
*Peabody, Mrs. W. B. O.
*Peele, Willard
Peirce, Henry A.
Perkins, Francis
Perkins, Thomas H.
Pettes, Henry
Phelps, Mrs. Abel
*Phillips, Mrs. John
Phillips, Jonathan
Phillips, Stephen C.
*Pickman, Dudley L.
*Pickman, Benjamin T.
Pierce, John B.
Pierce, S.
Piper, Solomon
Pray, Lewis G.
Preble, William P.
Prentiss, John
Prescott, Oliver
*Prescott, William
Putnam, Mrs. George
Putnam, Philemon
Quincy, Josiah
Quincy, Josiah, Jr.
Rantoul, Robert
Read, James
Rhoades, Stephen
Rhodes, James T.
Rice, Henry
Richardson, James B.
Roberts, Amos M.
Rogers, John
Rogers, John B.
Rogers, John G.
Rogers, Mrs. J. H.
Russell, Nathaniel
Ruthven, Miss Marian
Sabine, F. M.
Salisbury, Samuel
Saunders, Mrs. Elizabeth
Savage, James
Sawyer, Samuel, 2d
Seaver, Benjamin
*Seaver, Charles
Seaver, George
Sewall, Mrs. Amy P.
Sewall, Daniel
Shaw, Francis G.
Shaw, Lemuel
Shaw, Robert G.
Shaw, W. C.
Shove, Jonathan
Smith, Mrs. Amos
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THE MACEDONIAN CRY.

["And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."—*Acts* xvi. 9.]

Reader! Do you believe in the Gospel of Christ? Do you receive it as the precious gift of God for the redemption of the world? If you do, then is it your duty to do what you can, and all that you can, to spread it abroad among men,—to increase its influence over their hearts and lives. Do you believe that man is an immortal and accountable spirit, whose actions have eternal issues, and whose character and conduct here determine his destiny hereafter? If you do, then to aid in the redemption of an immortal soul from sin and death,—to aid in its preparation through the faith of the Gospel for heaven and happiness,—must be to you the very highest and noblest object to which a portion of your wealth, your energies, and your influence can be directed. Do you love your country? Do you rejoice in its true prosperity? Would you make it a *Christian* country? If you would, then are you called upon to bear a part in the great, the constant, the far-reaching efforts that are required to increase and diffuse those moral and religious influences that can alone withstand the corrupting power of prosperity and sanctify the heart of this nation,—make the civilization which these United States are destined to extend over half a continent a *Christian* civilization, thoroughly impregnated with the spirit and the faith of the Gospel. Have you met the claims which are thus made upon the sincerity of your faith, your piety, your benevolence, your patriotism? Are there no inward reproaches? no con-

sciousness that, in this great work of diffusing Christian truth and promoting Christian righteousness, you have not fulfilled the high law which makes "ability the measure of duty," — have not done what you could within your immediate sphere by personal effort and influence, and beyond that sphere through the agencies and opportunities offered by Providence to your zeal and benevolence? If there is this consciousness, let it quicken you to repentance and good works; let it change neglect to effort, and indifference to zeal. The time is short, — the work is great, — opportunities press, — agencies of various kinds offer themselves. Among these, the American Unitarian Association presents itself to your use, urges upon you its claims, invites you to aid in its efforts by good gifts to its treasury. Its object is noble and Christian. It would diffuse the simple truths of the Gospel among those who are ready and waiting to receive them, and through the power of these truths promote Christian righteousness, make bad men good and good men better, produce a higher tone of spiritual life, a more devout piety, a more earnest and practical faith in every heart it can reach by its influence. Its labors are conducted in the spirit of an enlarged catholic charity, without bitterness, bigotry, or denunciation. It appeals to its history, which is honorable, and not without fruit; to its tracts and publications, which are replete with sound doctrine, a reverent spirit of faith, a calm, earnest, practical piety. In common with every missionary society of every denomination in the land, it has a wide door of usefulness opened to it. Its modes of operation are various. It aims to promote theological education, and to prepare for the ministry young men who shall be willing to devote themselves for years to the toils and sacrifices of missionary life. It aims to send these men forth into regions near and afar, that are destitute of religious institutions and religious instruction, that they may preach the Gospel to those who would not hear it unless a preacher were sent. It aims to supply these missionaries with tracts, and, through these and other agents employed for the purpose, to scatter wherever they can over the land religious books, simple in their theology, practical in their character, whose words of wisdom and of truth shall carry lessons of counsel, warning,

or encouragement to many a family and to many a heart. Near and afar, also, in New England and the West, it aims by sympathy and aid to encourage existing religious societies, and make them towers of strength, fountains of living water to refresh the weary souls, beacon-lights to guide the wanderers, in their vicinity. In all the ways of a practical wisdom it endeavors to be an efficient Christian missionary society, to promote the spread of Christian truth, liberty, holiness, and love. To be efficient it must have means, and that its means may be adequate to its wants and its opportunities, all who feel an interest in those views of Christian truth which it advocates, those general religious ideas which it promulgates, must contribute something to its treasure. Reader! Do not you be among those who neglect this. Bring this matter home to your thoughts, as it will appear in that hour when all earthly wealth is passing from your grasp, and you yourself are passing into the spiritual world. Remember that, in that hour, you will not regret whatever you may have done, or whatever you may have given, to the cause of Christ. Do you stand in the pulpit? Neglect not to urge upon your hearers the duty and importance of some missionary efforts beyond the limits of their own society, and through your influence let there be some union of action among them, some combination of means, in behalf of this great cause. Do you sit in the pews? Fail not to coöperate with your minister and your brethren in this matter. Above all, fail not to aid it yourself. The Macedonian Cry for "Help in the great work of spreading the Gospel" comes up from every quarter. Let the ear of your heart be open to this cry, — feel its urgency, — comprehend the depth and force of its meaning, — and you will not withhold, you will not be disposed to withhold, such share of your means as ought to be devoted to meeting and answering this great cry for "Help" that is borne to us from so many waste places in Zion.

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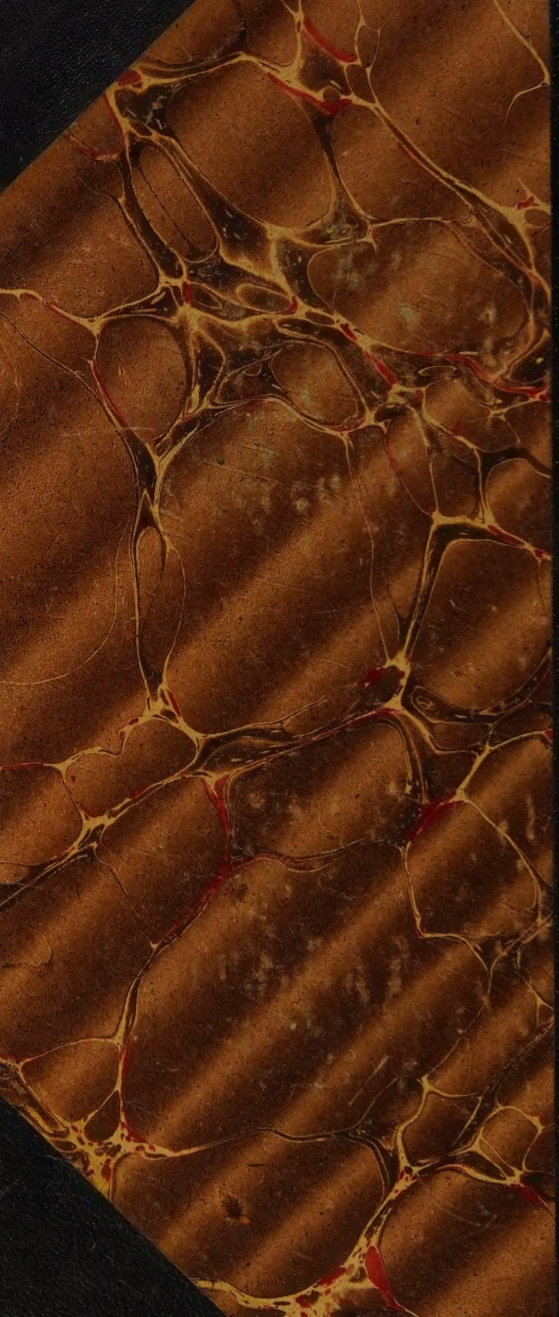
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